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What's
happening
to

doctrine?



CHARTING A COURSE: FROM THE COUNCIL TO THE SYNOD

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Correspondence

AIDS & emotions

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: "Our Fragile Brothers" [July 12] was a beautiful articulation of powerful emotions that I too have been privileged to feel. As a chaplain aide at Bellevue Hospital, I assist in the ministry to AIDS patients. In the process, I have found my personal vulnerability exposed, and my false securities and values threatened. I have also been opened up to a new awareness of God, who is nowhere more present than in those who suffer and are rejected.

Thanks to Jim Nieckarz for his courageous, provocative article. We need to be reminded that AIDS can victimize us all, unless we confront our own mortality and weakness, and accept and give the compassion God shows for all his children. PHYLLIS L. TOWNLEY

AIDS & suffering

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: We of the St. Vincent's Hospital Hospice Program are compressing our joy in and affirmation of Father Jim Nieckarz's stirring and challenging reflections ["Our Fragile Brothers," July 12] in the heartfelt words, "Thank you, Jim." His reflections are accurate, honest, filled with sorrow, and rightly so. We — the people of God — who participate in meetings and marches for peace and social justice throughout various parts of the world are rushing past a segment of society present among us who are a rejected, persecuted, and ostracized people — many of whom are currently suffering from a fatal, incurable, virtually untreatable modern-day "leprosy"; they are dying of AIDS!

And as great as their physical pain and emotional and spiritual sufferings are, they are not the only ones suffering. Parents, partners, wives, children, friends, who could be you or me or our next door neighbor, are in pain; the pain of shame, embarrassment, anxiety, guilt, loss, anger; this is suffering. How many of

them are able to find the open arms of the father and the tenderness of the mother in us who are the church?

AIDS is not disappearing; it has become the most recent challenge to the people of God. We must rise above our fears, our prejudices, our sexual pride, and see the person of Jesus sweating, stumbling, scratched, "a worm and not a man" as he wends his way to Calvary.

SISTER PATRICE MURPHY

AIDS & perspective

St. Cloud, Minn.

To the Editors: Father Nieckarz's article on AIDS ["Our Fragile Brothers," July 12] illustrates one of the most depressing features of the contemporary theological scene: when the constraints of imposed orthodoxy are set aside, the result is not the courageous and independent thought some might hope for, but the worst sort of sentimentality and special pleading — the sort of thought academics call "touchy-feely." Though we are less willing than our ancestors to speak of God's judgment on sin, still a sense of the anger of Yahweh must mix with insights from sources more palatable to the liberated if we are to retain a critical perspective on the tragedy of youthful suffering and death.

There has been no conspiracy of silence about either homosexuality or AIDS. Both have been aired to the point where it is hard to avoid nostalgia for the days when there was such a thing as the love that dared not speak its name. It is not that all-purpose scapegoat, "society," but the male homosexual community that nurtures and transmits AIDS. And if the AIDS epidemic escapes the groups now most at risk, gay liberation, and the extreme sexual promiscuity that some of its representatives have celebrated, it will prove to be a threat to the life and health of every man and woman in America.

PHILIP E. DEVINE

AIDS & a cure

Millbrae, Calif.

To the Editors: The straw man, fearful homophobic, isn't keeping us from an

AIDS cure. Father Nieckarz ["Our Fragile Brothers," July 12] leans heavily on church people. Would that we had a cure for alcoholism too, or the common cold. JOHN THACKER

AIDS & sin

Atlanta, Ga.

To the Editors: Father Jim Nieckarz's article ["Our Fragile Brothers," July 12] was a most moving experience for me. The church's "conspiracy of silence" and its "antiquated moral theology" regarding homosexuality (and I might add about certain aspects of heterosexuality) is probably the greatest, but most overlooked, sin within the church. What a shame that so many are coming to realize this sin as they see their brothers die from AIDS. Father Nieckarz's very personal and compassionate writing of his own experiences will, I hope, lead more in the church to face the challenge that he attributes to AIDS: "It challenges our prejudices, our narrow dogmatism, our inadequate sexual morality."

The November/December 1982 issue of *Church & Society*, a publication of the Program Agency of the United Presbyterian Church, is devoted entirely to "Homophobia: The Overlooked Sin." I highly recommend this issue to your readers and hope that someday I'll find a similar type issue published by *Commonweal*.

As I myself am infected with the AIDS virus, I pray at Mass each morning that God will spare me from developing any (Continued on page 478)

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SLOUCHING TOWARD SUPERIORITY

OF ALL THE POLITICAL judgments American citizens are called upon to make, few are as important as those having to do with our government's stance toward arms control. And few are as frustrating. Not only are arms negotiations conducted behind the screen of secrecy. They are controlled by a very peculiar logic.

Take the issue of anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) testing. It is an issue of no small consequence. To the extent that the deterrence systems of both superpowers rely on satellites, a breakthrough in anti-satellite weaponry could very well be a breakthrough to chaos. It is as though two evenly matched gunfighters, neither willing to draw first, were suddenly plunged into darkness.

This summer the Soviet Union proposed a moratorium on such testing after its own ASAT system, considered "operative" by the U.S. although recognized as "crude" by scientists, failed its latest test in June. The U.S. says it won't discuss the Soviet offer until next November's Geneva summit. Instead, having overcome previous congressional opposition, the administration has moved swiftly to begin a crucial series of tests, using a target in space, for our own anti-satellite system. In compliance with congressional requirements, notification of the forthcoming test asserts, among several debatable points, that the ASAT test would not interfere with negotiations on banning ASAT systems.

Yes, you read it correctly. The president certified that testing a weapon would not interfere with banning it. A familiar turn of logic: test, though the stated goal is to ban; appropriate funds, though the goal is to "bargain away" and dismantle. It is a pattern regularly followed — with the MX, with Euromissiles, most recently with nerve gas. Is there a contradiction in the house? Yes and no.

Both superpowers theoretically deny seeking strategic superiority and demand nothing but balance. In the ASAT case, Larry Speakes asserts that there is a "growing threat" from Soviet satellites; and that stability via "equivalent capability" is essential. He calls for "a balance," and for the means "to provide an incentive" for the Soviets to negotiate.

But compare Mr. Speakes's words to the descriptions offered by scientists; as reported in the *New York Times*, who said a fully developed U.S. system of anti-satellite weapons would be "vastly more advanced than the Soviet one . . . ten times faster . . . potentially ten times as many." If these scientists are correct and if the U.S. tests prove successful, then the administration's plan resembles a slouch toward superiority rather than the "balance," "catch up," or "equivalent capability" announced by Mr. Speakes.

That slouch toward superiority seems to be practically built into the arms negotiations processes as currently practiced. For one thing, if negotiations fail, then no time has been lost in testing or developing a weapon. For another thing, there is the

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difficulty of defining "balance" when the weapons of both sides are so complex and do not easily bear correlation. Then, too, there are plenty of interested parties reluctant to admit "balance" when just one more step may provide some marginal advantage. Because testing ASAT, for example, is not specifically prohibited by the existing ABM treaty, it provides a way of advancing Star Wars which, done more directly, would violate that agreement. Finally, if "balance" is the stated goal, then why not use the prospect of "a little more than balance" as an incentive and bargaining ploy in negotiations? By pushing to complete an initial test before the Geneva meeting, isn't the administration simply making sure the Soviets get serious? Unfortunately, that argument not only collides with the ASAT system's link to Star Wars, which remains, to date, non-negotiable by Mr. Reagan's decree; it also stumbles on the present plan to conduct further tests every four months.

Of course, the administration might argue (if it were being candid) that there's nothing wrong with going beyond "balance" when the weapons systems at issue are essentially *defensive*. Sorry, that won't do either. The truth is that between the superpowers, technology promises us no defensive systems which do not also pose offensive threats. That goes for anti-satellite weaponry. That goes for ABM systems. That goes for Star Wars.

The only way out of this gridlock is for someone to make a move, and there is scarcely a safer one than in the area of ASATs. A tested Soviet anti-satellite weapon which is primitive versus an incompletely tested U.S. one which is sophisticated — this is as close to real balance as can be expected. Those who don't want to live with the remaining degree of ambiguity should ask themselves whether they prefer living with the Soviets' *next* anti-satellite system — the one they will develop to "catch up" to our imminent "advantage."

The administration should forego the ASAT test now scheduled. And whether or not the administration is wise enough to backtrack on that first test, it should resist the mirage of "a little more than balance" — and go to Geneva ready to negotiate a separate ASAT treaty. Finally, rather than using anti-satellite tests as a way around the ABM treaty or as a tit-for-tat tactic to counter possible Soviet violation of that agreement, the administration should reaffirm that treaty, aiming to modify and reinforce it, removing ambiguities and clarifying key terms to deal with the latest technology.

At least as much as the United States, the Soviet Union also appears caught in the peculiar logic which makes arms negotia-

tions only a superficial adjunct to the underlying action-reaction spiral of the arms race. Moscow has offered a moratorium on nuclear testing which Washington has found unacceptable. In arms proposals, if either side breaks the pattern, there is no guarantee the other will follow. But the real anti-satellite system test is the test of whether our government is willing to try.

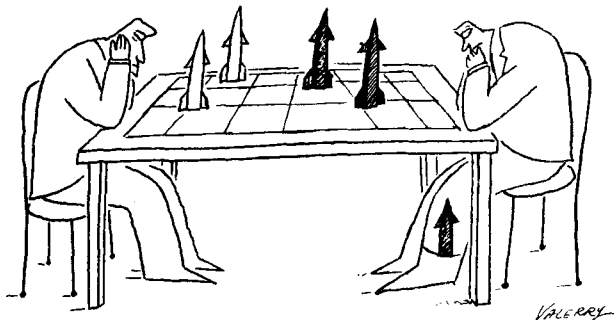
Motown to Coaltown

LABOR DRAWS THE LINE MINEWORKERS DIG IN

UNLESS YOU have driven them before, there is no quick way up or down the twisting roads that take you through the West Virginia and Kentucky coal country. But as the United Auto Workers 217-car caravan, "Motown to Coaltown II," snaked out of the mountains along Route 49 and headed for the Matewan Bridge, it didn't just seem to be moving slowly. It seemed to be in slow motion. From the foot of the bridge you could hear the honking of the lead cars long before you heard the sound of their motors, and then as the UAW caravan drew closer, you suddenly realized how long it stretched. As the first cars reached the bridge and began crossing into Kentucky, other cars, their headlights on despite the noon sun, were still coming down the West Virginia side of Route 49.

The first "Motown to Coaltown" trip was in 1978, during an 111-day United Mine Worker strike. This August 10 "Motown to Coaltown II" was bringing food and clothing for UMW miners, now in the tenth month of their strike against A.T. Massey, the nation's sixth largest coal producer. As soon as the UAW caravan came into sight, cheers rose from the miners and their families, standing at both ends of the bridge and along the railroad tracks at the bottom of the mountains. It was not the kind of frantic cheering you hear at baseball games or rock concerts. It was quieter, more personal, and the UAW workers, who had been on the road for seventeen hours now, sensed the difference. As their cars drew close, they slowed even more. You could hear people talking back and forth. You could see some fighting back tears. It was as if the arrival of the Auto Workers had made it possible for the UMW miners and their families to acknowledge, if only for the moment, the strain and isolation the strike had made them feel. It was clear that if the Auto Workers had come empty handed, they would have been just as welcome. What mattered was that they had come.

The UMW's strike against A.T. Massey is one that does not get much coverage outside of West Virginia and Kentucky, and when it does get covered, what makes the news is the kind of violence the wire services find easy to pick up — a shooting or a clash between strikers and scabs. Yet even the violence of this strike is rarely accurately reported. For what is going on



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here is not simply another struggle between a union and a coal company, but a clash that has been Vietnamized. Massey admits to spending \$200,000 a month on security, and the evidence is everywhere. It is not simply that Massey has acquired the kind of hardware — helicopters, an armored personnel carrier — that one associates with a military operation. It is that, like the American army in Vietnam, Massey has begun to change the countryside, to implement its own version of a strategic hamlets program. Drive by a Massey coal mine during the day and what you are struck by are miles of chain-link fences and cement observation posts with cameras and armed guards. Drive by the same mines at night and high-intensity search lights are everywhere. Guards, communicating with each other over CB radios, note every car that stops, every unexpected visitor to a UMW picket site. Strikes in the coal fields have never been peaceful, but this is a show of force that suggests a large component of psychological warfare.

The real story of the Massey strike is, however, in what is at stake for the United Mine Workers and the American labor movement in the 1980s. Last September when Massey pulled out of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association and refused to re-sign the contracts it had with the UMW, it was not simply attempting to do what so many companies have done in recent years — impose a series of givebacks that would let them improve their corporate picture. Massey's move was an altogether different one. It was a strategy for breaking the UMW in the area of the country where it is strongest. What Massey demanded from the UMW was separate contracts at each of its subsidiaries, and in the mining industry, as both sides knew, this was an impossible demand. In order to maintain re-employment and pension rights, miners work on a system that allows them, when a company closes a mine, to move to another company mine on the basis of their existing seniority. Without such a transfer system, a miner, as soon as the coal seam he was working on gave out, would go back to the same status he had when he first entered the mines; and a company, simply by closing a mine and opening it up again at a new location under a new name, could acquire workers for whom it had no long-term obligations and to whom it could pay starting wages, no matter how much experience they had.

For the UMW the result has been a challenge from which there is no retreating, and in coming to the side of the Massey strike, the UAW workers, who had travelled all night from Detroit, were making it clear they understood the Mine Workers' situation. "You are on the cutting edge," UAW regional director Frank Runnels declared at a rally. "If they can break a union here in Kentucky and West Virginia, they can break it in Detroit." These were words the UMW strikers needed to hear, and in return they gave each auto worker a camouflage T-shirt with "Motown to Coaltown II" stencilled across it in huge block letters. Camouflage T-shirts and pants have become the uniform of the day among the UMW miners on strike — what work shirts and blue jeans were to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and also a reminder of the large number of Vietnam vets among the miners and of their visceral patriotism. The gift of the T-shirts from one union to another was no theatrical

gesture. It goes to the heart of what the UMW under its president, thirty-five-year-old lawyer and former miner Richard Trumka, sees as its role in resisting the crippling demands that have come to be expected of basic industry in America.

What is going on in the David-and-Goliath battle between the UMW, with its 155,000 active members, and A.T. Massey, a company jointly owned by Fluor Corporation and Royal Dutch/Shell Group, is not, however, a fight in which David has come armed only with a cause and rhetoric. The UMW has made its strike against Massey a selective one, thus allowing it to pay its workers medical benefits plus \$200 a week strike wages from a strike fund totalling \$70 million. And in dealing with Massey's claim that its subsidiaries should have the right to negotiate separate union contracts, the UMW is winning the legal battle. The National Labor Relations Board has made a preliminary determination that, as the UMW charges, Massey is a single employer, not a series of subsidiary operations, and should deal with its workers on that basis. Most important in terms of the future, the UMW is putting in place a corporate campaign designed to create special problems for Massey's parent companies by focusing on their South African operations, particularly Shell's coal mining. Informational leafletting at Shell Gas stations in Wheeling produced dramatic results in late July. In Michigan, where UAW influence runs strong, Detroit Edison and Consumer Power of Michigan, two utilities that use Massey coal, should be feeling public pressure shortly. For a union that has traditionally taken an industry-wide approach to strikes, it is a novel set of tactics to be using. But in 1985 no union leadership seems more attuned to political reality and at the same time more convinced it can rely on a membership where whole families still speak of what life was like before there was a union.

NICOLAUS MILLS

(Nicolaus Mills teaches at Sarah Lawrence and is on the editorial board of Dissent.)

August's Ribbon

PAGEANT & PROTEST

THE SEARCH FOR STRATEGY

ON AUGUST 4 a Ribbon, composed of 25,000 individually created segments, wrapped fifteen miles of Washington's monuments. Like a medieval procession, thousands upon thousands of hand-made lengths of cloth joined into a Christo-like tapestry sculpture, wove down the green Mall and around the White House, crossed Memorial Bridge, and encircled the Pentagon. "So subdued and serene it defied description," wrote the *Washington Post*, forty years following the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

What was the Ribbon? It was accompanied neither by

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speeches, nor accusations. Yet it was conceived in protest. Each of its fragments had been embroidered, appliqued, or painted with what its creator most cherished in this world and could not bear to lose in a nuclear war: babies, trees, beaches; footprints; football plays; whole neighborhoods and mountain ranges; lines of music and pages of books; even a stem of poison ivy with the reflection: "I shall miss even the least of Thy creations." One embroidery-stitched panel, entitled "History of the World in One Yard," depicted our earth's history from the separation of celestial matter through dinosaurs and pyramids and skyscrapers to a child asking, "Will the Bomb go off tomorrow, Mommy?"

More than half of those who participated in creating the Ribbon had never before been involved in a social protest. Generally women, they were asking for peace for the first time in a public demonstration. They arrived the only way they knew how, bearing gifts. The almost exclusively symbolic nature of the Ribbon, as well as most other anti-nuclear demonstrations this August, points to the present difficulties of the American peace movement in face of a popular administration which daily expands the nuclear arsenal. Polls indicate that the American public itself is caught in a double-bind of uncertainty: still wanting a nuclear weapons freeze, it has elected a president who opposes one; at the same time, a majority of those polled believes the Strategic Defense Initiative may facilitate an arms control treaty but recognizes such a development will lead only to new Soviet weapons to circumvent it.

Unlike highly successful protests in our century, from Gandhi's Salt March to the boycotts against segregation and present divestment sit-ins against apartheid, the anti-nuclear movement has not yet clarified the economic pressure points needed to effect meaningful protest. Thus, it is largely relegated to entirely symbolic acts which limit not only its effectiveness but its size and ability to galvanize support. Those who do remain active, like Tula Jaffe, an organizer of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament in California who came to Washington for the Ribbon, do so out of strong conviction and even inner necessity. "The real issue for me is not the outcome of my work, but rather the process and the belief that it is morally necessary to have at least tried."

The Ribbon pointed up two phenomena worth noting. One is the growing prominence of women as leaders in the peace movements. Second, the decentralization of the movement, and its greater effectiveness locally than nationally.

It seems indisputable that women have become charismatic leaders for peace. To images of Gandhi at the spinning wheel or Martin Luther King, Jr. at the head of marches, we now add women's impassioned eyes, hands, and voices. Their messengers are as varied as the Cassandra-like Helen Caldicott, the Macbethian chorus of women from Greenham Commons, and the gentle prodding of Justine Merritt, the Ribbon's founder. A grandmother, retired English teacher, and Catholic convert, Justine Merritt's dream led her to Washington "to tie a ribbon around the Pentagon, like a ribbon around your finger, a gentle reminder that we love the earth and its people."

Justine Merritt is nothing if not comforting. Her voice

quavers when she speaks. She is not your opponent but your friend. Like Gandhi, she began by reforming her own life, radically simplifying it, and deriving strength and joy from the details of handwork. The fact that it took her 700 hours to embroider a single Ribbon panel with the names of everyone she knew impressed even Pentagon generals. Examining it closely, they said it must have taken a great deal of time and was beautiful. As a result of her friendly visit, they granted her permission to encircle the Pentagon's own walls. Little by little, it became apparent that Justine Merritt, by then a pilgrim living on donations and suffering from heart problems, was unstoppable. "The Ribbon was God's idea," she says. "My part was not to argue."

Within two years — the Ribbon was dedicated in the National Cathedral this August 3 — the Ribbon consisted of 25,000 pieces of folk art. Held aloft by young and old, made in prisons and at sewing bees by people who became artists for the first time, it released the deep yearning of countless hearts. Ribbon sections came from across the country and around the world. The final creation was fashioned in towns, gathered piece by piece, and finally joined state by state. The city of Khor in Russia sent ribbons made by children for a Ground Zero project with a sister city in Oregon; there were fifty segments from Holland; many panels came from Japan. There would eventually be Ribbon ceremonies in Hiroshima itself.

Across America other, mostly symbolic, actions paralleled the Ribbon this August. They included Ground Zero projects, Nuclear Free Zones, the adoption of sister cities in the USSR, citizen diplomacy, and protests against GWEN — the Ground Wave Emergency Network, a special communications system the military is developing to withstand the electromagnetic pulse from a high altitude nuclear explosion — which have catalyzed more than symbolic resistance. When it was learned that GWEN towers, seen as being developed exclusively for protracted "nuclear war fighting," were projected for Amherst, Massachusetts, opposition arose there. Citizens refused to permit a tower within city limits and have so far halted its construction.

Towers may seem a long way from the Ribbon, but they are not. Protests against invasion of home space or against weapon-carrying transports through one's town (like the refusal by physicians and nurses to prepare hospitals for nuclear war victims) are effective because the objectives are more clearly linked to daily life. The great difficulty in opposing the arms race is that people who are not part of the military apparatus know little about it — it is shrouded as was Kafka's Castle. Resistance to the nuclear arms race seems to work best when that shroud is separated into its parts — a tower here, a transport there — or, in its symbolic form, when men, women, and children wrap a beautiful, segmented banner around the Pentagon to bear witness against nuclear nightmare. The message of the Ribbon is that we can still create and resist. Dissent is necessary and possible. We need never be in thrall to the Mentality of Destruction.

BARBARA L. BAER

(Barbara L. Baer, a writer from Northern California, has a family and is active in the peace movement.)

Of several minds: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*

NEGATIVE LIBERTY

CHEERING FOR THE GOOD OLD CAUSE

THERE IS something wonderfully quaint about the enthusiastic reaction with which many freedom-loving Americans greeted the recent 5 to 4 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing the Michigan and New York City practice of sending public school teachers into the classrooms of church-related schools to give remedial instruction. The shadow of religious tyranny, it seems, which loomed large only last year as a result of the Pawtucket nativity scene decision, has receded. Those who believe in freedom of conscience and the wall of separation can begin, once again, to breathe easily.

I don't want to challenge the constitutional propriety of the Court's decision. On questions of constitutional law I confess to being a functional illiterate. I am somewhat literate, however, on the significance of close votes, and I suspect that the 5 to 4 split indicates that something over and above the transparent constitutional merits of the case led to the decision. All the same, I'm willing to stipulate that the decision was a legally sound one. Three cheers for Justice Brennan.

What intrigues me is not the rightness or wrongness of the decision but, as I said, the enthusiasm with which it was received. We live in a late twentieth-century world in which the danger of religious oppression in the United States would rank, if we could create an objective ranking system for the planet's ills, in about 2,349th place. Yet to judge from the reaction of the liberal press and other defenders of freedom, you'd think the Court's decision was a triumph on par with the blooming of Ethiopian deserts, the conviction of Pol Pot for crimes against humanity, the spread of literacy in Central America, or the dramatic reduction of infant mortality rates in low-income sections of American big cities.

One of the hardest things in the world, it appears, is for a society to escape the intellectual confines of what may be called its "foundation myth." If a nation has been founded (or re-founded) at a more or less definite moment in history, as the United States was in "that moment" called the American Revolution, the popular interpretation of that moment (which is what I mean by the foundation myth) permeates ever after that society's institutions and group memory. While individuals in the society may be able to analyze the world and its problems in terms other than those provided by the foundation myth, the society in its collective capacity finds it nearly impossible to do so.

The American foundation myth has to do of course with freedom — but of a certain very limited kind. Our freedom is not one of the interior and philosophically subtle freedoms spoken of by St. Paul (freedom from sin) or the mystics (the freedom from self which is equivalent to oneness with God) or Kant (the autonomy that consists in obedience to nothing but the voice of reason within us). Nor is it the Marxian concept, so popular today in the third world, which holds that liberation is achieved only when we have escaped from a hundred-and-one nearly invisible chains of economic, social, and cultural bondage, including above all the ideological chain of false consciousness, which is responsible for making all the other chains so difficult to discern.

No, the freedom our American foundation myth upholds is the simple and straightforward kind which exists when, in matters which don't immediately jeopardize public order, *A* abstains from imposing his or her will on *B*, or *B* successfully refuses to obey the will of *A*. Our founding fathers and their brothers were able to get terribly excited about

this sort of freedom in the 1770s, and Americans ever since have found it relatively easy to get worked up about it. It is what Isaiah Berlin has called "negative freedom."

Freedom of religion — including freedom *from* religion, if that's your cup of tea — is a striking instance of this don't-push-me-around type of liberty. Although the American Revolution was not immediately concerned with religious liberty, it is little wonder that the event produced a great expansion of it, so similar in structure are political and religious freedom. Nor is it any wonder that Americans two hundred years later — our political sensibilities still under the sway of this powerful foundation myth — feel a thrill of excitement when the Supreme Court solemnly declares that it is repulsing the latest assault on the "No Establishment Clause" — even though the villain of the piece turns out, on inspection, not to be Torquemada lighting fires of persecution, but the school board of New York City sending remedial reading teachers into Catholic schools.

I'm not suggesting that we Americans ought to renounce our disproportionate devotion to negative liberty. Far from it. It may well be true, as romantically inclined Frenchmen have long believed, that nations have historical vocations. If so, it is probably the American national calling to carry the old-fashioned banner of negative freedom in a world that increasingly shows scant concern for it.

What I'm suggesting instead is that a nation which is so preoccupied with the "good old cause" of negative freedom (our conservatives laying special emphasis on freedom in business affairs, our liberals in cultural affairs) is little equipped to understand much of the rest of the world — especially that portion we most urgently need to understand — the poor and developing nations. Negative liberty is a magnificent thing, a thing well worth defending, a thing so magnificent in fact that it justifies our looking with pitying condescension on lesser breeds without the law who fail to appreciate its immense worth. But it isn't the only good thing in the world. It isn't the only yardstick for measuring the merit of nations.

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

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What's happening to doctrine?

JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL pronounced no new doctrines of faith, nor, of course, did it deny any. But the council was the arena of a very significant debate on the nature and role of doctrines in the church, which was in turn to be followed by a set of doctrinal controversies at least as serious as those that marked the Modernist controversy at the turn of this century.

The main lines of the debate became clear in the first session of the council. The Preparatory Theological Commission, largely dominated by members of or consultants to the Holy Office, had composed three doctrinal texts: "The Sources of Revelation"; "The Defense of the Deposit of Faith"; and "The Church." These texts were very defensive efforts, warning the church of dangers to traditional Catholic doctrines believed to be widespread in modern consciousness among Protestants, and now tempting unwary Catholics. In all three texts, the classic modern understanding of doctrines was presupposed and defended.

According to this view, doctrines are propositional expressions of Christian truth, revealed in the words and speeches of divine legates. These legates, the greatest of whom was Jesus Christ, possessed divine authority because God had confirmed their statements by prophecy and miracle, particularly in the case of Christ by raising him from the dead. The teachings of these legates was entrusted to the Apostles and through them to the pope and bishops, who were instituted by Christ and

guided by his Spirit in their essential role of preserving, communicating, and authoritatively interpreting the deposit of faith. The authority of these teachers derived, not from their personal holiness, wisdom, or talents, but from their office and from the command of Christ to "teach all nations," a charge which carried with it the power to command assent from the "learning Church." This teaching authority constituted the *proximate* rule of faith, as compared to the more *remote* (because more obscure and implicit) "sources of revelation" — the Scriptures and the Tradition. Doctrines, finally, were expressed in a language sanctioned by antiquity, tradition, and

authority; and they were defended among Catholics by a distinct philosophical and theological method and system, Neo-Scholasticism, which claimed to be perennial and universally valid.

The three texts which had been prepared for the council debates were designed to consecrate this understanding of doctrines, its origins, function, and defense. They were written particularly in view of

TWO DECADES after Vatican II, important issues raised in the council's debates and reflected in its documents remain sharply debated. In anticipation of next November's extraordinary synod, called to examine the council's work and its aftermath, *Commonweal* is publishing a series of articles on a number of these unsettled issues. Previous articles dealt with the council's optimistic stance toward modernity (Gregory Baum in the June 21 issue); the question of authority (Avery Dulles, July 12 issue); and women in the church (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, August 9 issue). In the next issue, Lisa Sowle Cahill will discuss the church's moral teaching.

THE EDITORS

tendencies which had first clearly manifest themselves in Modernism, but then had revived in the late 1940s as the "new theology" which had been condemned by Pope Pius XII in *Humani Generis* (1950). The chief dangers were perceived to come from several modern developments. The first of these was the spread of historical criticism in the interpretation of the Scriptures, which was challenging the historical validity of the New Testament accounts of the life of Jesus and of the origins of the church. Historical consciousness had a second impact, however, in the form of a tendency to relativize the claims to antiquity and to universality of traditional structures, languages, and doctrinal statements.

A third dangerous tendency was visible in the increasing appeals to the human experience of both the agents and the

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recipients of divine revelation. Finally, Catholics who were involved in the ecumenical movement were feared to be unduly indulgent towards Protestant views and unduly willing to make concessions about Catholic doctrines and structures.

In short, the preparatory documents were consistent in their analysis and in their response: against the threats of subjectivism and historicism, the council was to provide a massive reaffirmation of authority, the authority of God in revelation, of Christ as his chief legate, of the church as Christ's juridically empowered agent in the world, of the tradition of objective verbal statements which articulate the Christian mysteries.

The two draft documents which were brought to the council floor, on the sources of revelation and on the church, were so severely criticized by the council "Fathers" that they were remanded for thoroughgoing rewriting, and the third was never even presented. A major impetus for these criticisms came from the opening address of Pope John XXIII. The pope made it clear that to his mind the council was not meeting simply in order to repeat what the church had already taught nor to issue condemnations of contemporary errors. The council was to try, rather, to present a positive statement of the church's faith, pastoral in style and persuasive enough to draw people to the church on its own merits. The pope insisted that there is a difference between the truth of a doctrine and the way in which it is expressed, thus offering the council the opportunity to find a different expression, more suitable to contemporary society and culture, of the ancient faith. The pope had read and approved for conciliar discussion all the preparatory documents, and it is hard not to see those who had composed them as those persons whom the pope criticized as "prophets of doom" who could see in the modern world nothing but prevarication and ruin.

Emboldened by the pope's example, the majority of the council Fathers expressed a series of criticisms of the draft documents. The documents were rejected for being too Scholastic; too negative, suspicious, and defensive; too juridical; too representative of one school of thought; and insufficiently biblical, spiritual, pastoral, and ecumenical.

IN THE subsequent three sessions of the council, sixteen texts were to be written and promulgated. In many respects, they gave a new direction, form, and in some cases, substance to the church's traditional presentation of the faith. In the first place, the texts contained no doctrinal anathemas (the only two condemnations concerned moral issues: abortion and indiscriminate bombing). They deliberately departed from traditional conciliar language, being discursive in style and argument, and using biblical, patristic, and liturgical language in preference to Scholastic and juridical concepts. The earlier emphasis upon formal authority gave way to a direct statement of the central message of Christ and to a concentration on his person, his mysteries, and the share in his life which constitutes the heart of Christian existence. The council spoke of a "hierarchy of truths," not to question the truth of any doctrines, but to insist that they all be considered in relation to the center of Christian faith, the mystery of Christ received and

lived in the church. It acknowledged the possibility of imperfection in the church's expression of Christian doctrine, and it sanctioned a variety of such expressions, both in the differing liturgical and theological traditions of the Eastern churches and in the different cultural circumstances of the "new churches," which it encouraged to undertake their own culturally relevant *fides quaerens intellectum*. Finally, the council insisted that the church's magisterium is subordinate to the Word of God communicated in the Scriptures and tradition, and, while it reaffirmed its unique authoritative role in the church, it placed it in a fuller context in which other bearers of the Christian faith — the liturgy, the *sensus fidelium*, Christian spiritual experience — also have their own roles to play.

But while the texts of the council represent a repudiation of the attitudes and emphases of the preparatory drafts, they also bear clear marks of the controversies from which they emerged and of the compromise and ambiguity which were the price of the near unanimity with which they were passed.

On several issues the council chose not to resolve disputes, not to try to work out a full theory explaining how to integrate its new emphases into the older Catholic system, and sometimes to paper over the remaining differences either with bland language or by simply juxtaposing, without systematic reconciliation, statements reflecting the opposing viewpoints. Finally, the council did not offer much help for those who were troubled by the remarkable ways in which it departed from the attitudes and strategies with which the church had confronted modern society and culture since the French Revolution and which the preliminary drafts had intended to repeat and confirm. In that respect, Emile Poulat is correct in pointing to Archbishop Lefebvre as representing "*la mauvaise conscience romaine* for transformations accepted after having been long declared unacceptable, acquiesced in after having been pitilessly combated, without any other basis in the end than a change in perspective and in majority."

Given all this, it should not be surprising that the council gave rise in the next twenty years to a series of theological and doctrinal developments and controversies which were to the unhappy senses of a Jacques Maritain severe enough for him to say that, by comparison, the Modernist crisis was only a mild case of hay fever. Almost immediately the intellectual edifice of Neo-Scholasticism collapsed as many theologians abandoned its uniform method, language, and style of argument for an often bewildering variety of philosophical or social-scientific conceptions and methods. In place of the over-reliance on authority felt to be present in the classical modern presentation of the faith, theologians now made what they called "the anthropocentric turn," an effort to conceive and articulate the faith in terms of its ability to address the deepest desires and needs of the human person. As political theologians argued for a fundamental theology which recognized the primacy of the political and liberation theologians began to conceive of faith based on "orthopraxis," a practical commitment to free people from various sorts of economic, political, or sexist oppression, this anthropocentric turn was itself criticized for assuming as a norm the subjectivity of the

bourgeoisie. At the same time, theologians in Asia, Africa, and Latin America began the effort to forge a language and symbolism appropriate to cultures quite different from the western culture by which Catholicism had been molded for almost two millennia. A decade after the council, the previous, clearly recognizable unity of Catholic theology had been transformed into a plurality of theological efforts and visions.

IN THE MIDST of these transformations, a variety of issues were raised which soon brought on tensions and conflicts between theologians and church officials. Before the council had ended, theologians were experimenting with terms like "transignification" and "transfinalization" as more appropriate articulations of the mystery of the Eucharist than Trent's "transubstantiation." In 1965, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*, in which he rejected the adequacy of new formulas, defended Trent's term, and added a strong defense of the traditional Scholastic language employed by the church. When the Dutch bishops authorized *A New Catechism*, quite different in style and emphasis from the traditional works, Rome ordered a review of it and insisted that

clarifying and explicating addenda be added to all new editions. In 1968, Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae*, the encyclical on birth control, which was met by the greatest resistance to a papal document since the Syllabus of Errors, a response which not only called into question important elements of the church's teaching on marriage and sex, but prompted widespread claims to a "right to dissent."

Hans Küng used the centenary of Vatican I to raise fundamental historical and theological doubts about the church's infallibility. The issues raised by his book, *Infallible? An Inquiry*, were accompanied by those implied in the new efforts of theologians to place conciliar and papal teachings of the past in historical context and to work out hermeneutical principles for their interpretation. New questions were raised about the meaning, adequacy, and authority of Nicaea and Chalcedon. In 1972 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a warning against errors about the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Trinity. A year later, in *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, it addressed the underlying issue of doctrinal authority, strongly defending infallibility, but also for the first time including a qualified recognition of the historicity of dogmatic assertions and language. All these issues, both criteriological and substantive, were to be raised again in formal Roman investigations of the views of Küng and of Edward Schillebeeckx on Christology.

Other controversies were prompted by Catholic biblical scholarship on the historicity of the infancy narratives, on the Virgin Birth, and on the Resurrection of Christ. Biblical and historical critics raised serious doubts about the council's account of the origins of the church and of its ministries; while what constitutes permanent, *de jure divino* aspects of the church's structure became a topic of widespread theological discussion. Political and liberation theologians called for a thoroughgoing reinterpretation and reevaluation of the faith from the hermeneutical perspective provided by a commitment to the poor, itself often based on a Marxist analysis and critique of contemporary society. (Their efforts have recently been met by a Roman warning against certain excesses in liberation theology.) The sudden development in the church of movements for the ordination of women was met by an official, negative response in 1976, but the women's movement has continued to press upon the church issues which not only concern women's exclusion from the ordained ministry, but also raise the question of patriarchal bias at the heart of the traditional expression of the faith itself.

Rome intervened at several points in order to try to regain control over theological developments since the council and to assure the integrity of the inherited tradition. Pope Paul VI himself issued his "Credo of the People of God" in 1968 in order to meet the disquiet experienced by many Catholics and to restrain those "possessed by what is almost a passion for change and novelty." In the last fifteen years, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued documents at the rate of almost one a year to warn against error or to restate Catholic teaching. Several theologians have been the subject of official investigation by the Congregation, and some of

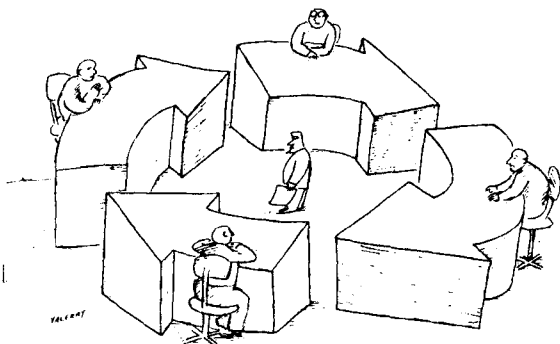
Sandra Schor

The Doctrine of the Last Hour

*The whole net profit derives from work
done during the last hour of a ten-hour day.*

Nassau Senior, Nineteenth-century
English economist

Does the doctrine of the last hour
govern your life, cage you in, your hands
feverish and constant as
electricity until the hour before you die?
Is this the hour, the occasion for fit profit-taking,
all energies till now murdered in the
manufacture of a life? At last.
To be alone with gain. I see you,
mad as Kafka's hunger artist, on view before a hooting
mob
with your lunch pail swinging, going to and from
the sorrows of a hated job. Soon
someone must carry you, like a Victorian child
still asleep, to your place at the machine this hour
before the last, not to squander a minute's time in the
manufacture of your life. Yet only the final hour
renders gain, and through all the others you must endure,
endure the long years—time that alters worth and
memory, that is
your cumulative power, that is your
money in the bank. Look about you.
Others have just begun. They do not know
the doctrine of the last hour and
work for every hour as if the final profitless blast
could blow at noon.



them have suffered one form or another of ecclesiastical discipline. The new Code of Canon Law has attempted to strengthen the authority of the church over appointments to theological faculties. The requirement of an *imprimatur* has been used as a disciplinary measure to insure doctrinal orthodoxy in catechisms and textbooks.

These measures, which have increased in number and severity in the last five years, have provoked in some Catholics the joyful expectation of what they consider a long overdue "Catholic restoration," and in others the fear that the church is being dragged back into an ecclesiastical regime in which unappealable exercises of authority are made to substitute for the critical dialogue by which they think doctrinal disputes are most effectively resolved. This disagreement among Catholics is often remarkably similar in tone and substance to the debates which marked the drama of Vatican II itself. In the alleged doctrinal chaos since the council, the one group sees a vindication of the fears expressed by "conservatives" at the council that the church was facing major threats to the integrity of its message and cohesion. In the alleged return to repressive authority, others see a fearful desire to guarantee by power what only trust in the Spirit of truth can really achieve. Both groups wonder whether the coming synod of bishops will not reverse the council, giving a chance to win the war to those who lost the major battle of Vatican II.

PERHAPS BOTH passions are exaggerated. Pope John Paul II is incessant in his invocations of Vatican II, and his invitation to the synod did not include the possibility of reversing its direction or its main emphases. On the other hand, what is meant by "Vatican II" is itself a matter of dispute. Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, regularly warns against the influence of appeals to a vague "spirit of the council" as opposed to the letter of the council. There is no doubt that some of what has happened since the council has sought support in very questionable appeals to the council's intentions. But, on the other hand, it is also clear that as an event the council was much more than its set of sixteen documents; the texts themselves, both by reversing earlier directions and emphases and by their compromise and ambiguity, helped to provoke post-conciliar confusion. Therefore, the council itself cannot provide a sufficient criterion for the problems of a church twenty years after the council closed.

On the other hand, many of those who are fearful about the coming synod suffer from the psychological and sociological

effects of having experienced the passage from what Karl Rahner used to call the transition from the "Pian" to the "Johannine" church. Those who can remember the last repressive decade of the reign of Pius XII greeted Vatican II as a moment of liberation, in which they could rejoice at the discomfiture of those who once had imposed their minds and wills in what were felt to be unjust ways. It is often very difficult for such people to accept with equanimity any exercise of authority, and a sort of group bias — "us against them" — often leads them to refrain from serious criticism of their fellow theologians, a failure, of course, which is almost guaranteed to make interventions of authority more likely.

The difficulties and tensions being experienced today are so great because the stakes are so high. They involve the integrity and illuminating power of the distinctive Catholic vision and the coherence and effectiveness of the church which is supposed to give a communal witness to that vision. But the stakes also include the discernment of what is truly central and permanent in the Christian message, and what may be reformed or even dropped as a now temporally or culturally alien expression of the message. And, finally, they include questions of justice towards individuals and of the most effective way — in a world which places great hopes in the ability of persons to arrive at the truth freely and without constraint — to secure that the full Gospel is effectively addressed to the present generation.

In these circumstances, theologians cannot reasonably expect the church to make its innermost life and its complex activity wait upon the fulfillment of their historical and hermeneutical task. On the other hand, theologians ought to be able to expect that the church will not deny them the right to engage their task in its full complexity and to work out its requirements by trial and error, by mutual criticism, and in accordance with strictly theological criteria. Furthermore, the church must not again attempt to avoid the tensions, difficulties, and dangers by an exercise of authority which denies the true nature of the present challenge, discourages people from undertaking it, and so postpones even further an authentic solution. In turn, the church has a right to expect from theologians great care in laying theological foundations, a genuine effort to show how their work is compatible with the central faith and traditions, and a willingness to engage in serious criticism of one another's work — all these being exigencies theologians must be willing to meet if they wish their work to be respected and valued in and by the church.

Pope John XXIII used to like to quote the old adage: "*in necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*." It is perhaps banal to recall it here, for the adage itself gives no direct help in discerning the necessary from the legitimately debatable. But perhaps the final recommendation — "charity in all matters" — can be of more assistance than those who occupy offices of power and those who spend their time studying and thinking are often inclined to believe. St. Paul urged us to "speak the truth in love," and that implies that those who do not love are unlikely to know the truth themselves or to acknowledge its presence in others.



FOOD, HEALTH, & SCHOOLING IN CUBA

Assessing a revolution

MAURICE R. BERUBE

CUBA HAS MADE significant progress in social policy since the revolution twenty-six years ago. But, that progress has been mixed and open to criticism, both for its accomplishments as well as for the lack of political freedom on which it is based. Recent independent studies, sympathetic but critical, reveal the degree of success in three key areas — food, health, and education. The findings are that Cuba has made great strides in education and health, not without serious problems however, and has suffered the severest setbacks in food and diet policy.

But those gains in some areas of social policy should not obscure the distressed condition of the Cuban economy. Cuba watchers are divided into two academic camps. One notes improvements in some areas of social policy whereas others concentrate on the political and economic difficulties. A recent confidential report by the Cuban National Bank, for example, to its creditors in Western nations (except the United States) cites some of these difficulties. The Cuban economy is heavily subsidized by the Soviet Union which pays Cuba ten times the world price for its major crop, sugar. Moreover, Cuba owes those Western nations nearly three and a half billion dollars, not counting the debt owed to the Communist bloc.

In his definitive study of the Cuban economy, *The Economy of Socialist Cuba*, (University of New Mexico, 1981), Cuban emigré scholar Carmelo Mesa-Lago of the University of Pittsburgh argues that the Cuban Revolution attempted too much. Revolutionary leaders struggled to balance economic growth, the major economic problem prior to the revolution, with social aims such as reducing unemployment, achieving equality, and providing social services. In the end, the revolution gave priority to social rather than economic development, and has only recently stressed the latter.

Even on social policy there has been some criticism, mainly from emigré scholars. They point out, and rightly so, that Cuba was far more advanced economically and socially than the rest of its Latin neighbors at the time of the revolution. Jorge Domínguez, a leading emigré scholar from Harvard

University, presents this argument in his classic *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Harvard University, 1978). Nevertheless, there have been even more significant strides in social policy in certain areas since the revolution. In health, for example, a more equitable distribution of free health care has replaced the pre-revolutionary fee-for-service system which saw two-thirds of the doctors practicing in Havana.

Unfortunately, there has been scant independent scholarship by Americans which would result in an accurate picture of Cuban society. That scarcity of information is the result of three primary causes. Foremost, the United States boycott of Cuba these past twenty-six years has inhibited American scholarship; travel to Cuba has been restricted except for a few short years during the Carter administration. Correspondingly, the siege mentality of Cuban government officials has often spilled over into a paranoia that distrusts independent studies from a Cold War foe; only in the last few years have Cuban officials permitted American scholars to conduct such studies, whereas Cuban academics are not encouraged to follow suit. And lastly, most scholarship that has emerged from Cuban emigrés suffers both from a polemical bent and the inability of most to return to the homeland and, more importantly, gain access to vital data and key government officials. Exceptions were made recently for a few leading emigré scholars. Mesa-Lago and Domínguez, for example, were invited to Cuba in the late seventies and early eighties, and the former's study of the Cuban economy profited from government access. Perhaps the Reagan administration's anti-Cuba policy, exemplified by Radio Martí, will result in the Cubans once again closing the door. This would be unfortunate. When I traveled to Cuba, for example, in the spring of 1983 to write a comparative study of education, I was astonished to learn that only three books on education by Americans, essentially journalistic accounts, had been published since the revolution in 1959.

Knowledge concerning Cuba must also filter through a maze of media misinformation emphasizing negative political overtones and neglecting positive, although still problematic, gains which have been made in social policy. One's impression of Cuba departs from such media overkill. For example, conservative propaganda from the Reagan administration has so inflated the role of Cuba in the tensions in Central and Latin America that one fails to realize how small, indeed, this tiny nation of 10 million people actually is. Educationally it compares more with the size of the New York City school district

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rather than with this nation of 234 million people. Secondly, the major fact about Cuba, which visiting that nation indelibly imprints, is that Cuba is still an underdeveloped country despite the two and a half decades of revolutionary government. Havana, for example, has none of the glitter of a Miami. On the other hand, there are no slums nor homeless people that characterize other Latin American countries, as well as the U.S. itself.

THE SINGLE greatest social policy failure of the revolutionary government has been its inability to provide a high-level diet with variety and attuned to the traditional eating habits of the Cuban people. This failure, a source of great dissatisfaction among Cubans, is the result of policy decisions to emphasize exports, as well as of planning errors. A recent study of food in Cuba — *No Free Lunch: Food and Revolution in Cuba Today* (The Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1985, \$7.95) by Meda Benjamin, Joseph Collins, and Michael Scott — highlights that policy. The ability of these authors, who are sympathetic — yet critical — of the Cuban Revolution, to obtain the highest access makes this study extremely valuable.

On the surface, statistics the authors cite regarding food and hunger in Cuba are positive. Cubans consume some 2800 calories a day, a respectable figure. In Latin America, Cuba is second only to Argentina in per capita food availability. Indeed, the authors of *No Free Lunch* conclude optimistically that "... hunger has been eliminated in Cuba, with few exceptions." They add, "Cubans may not have the kind of foods they want, or even as much as they want, but few suffer from lack of calories or protein."

What the statistics fail to reveal, nonetheless, are an extremely low level of nutrition and the constant exertion to obtain food. A major fact which emerges from the study is that Cuba is not now, and never has been, food sufficient. Food is in short supply. Shortly after the revolution, Cuban leaders declared an agricultural policy that would have made Cuba food sufficient without a need to import most food. After a brief interval, that policy was reversed, and to this day Cuba emphasizes sugar production destined for export and foreign dollars instead of cultivating more land for food independence. Moreover, food shortages, exacerbated by the United States boycott, motivated Cuban officials to institute rationing in 1962. Three years later, Fidel Castro promised to end rationing the following year. But in 1985 the rationing system is still in place, accounting for four-fifths of the Cuban diet; it shows no signs of disappearing.

Meat, coffee, rice, and beans — the traditional Cuban fare — are in short supply. The meat ration is 1 lb. 4 oz. of beef, and 1 lb. of chicken for each person every nine days. Five lb. of rice, 20 oz. of beans, and 4 oz. of coffee per person are given each month. Adults are permitted four cigars a month, in a country whose leader is rarely seen without a cigar, and three packs of cigarettes. Moreover, the best grades of fish, fruit, and rum are reserved for export. Although the revolution has raised the standard of living for the extremely poor, it still has a

long way to go to upgrade the quality of life for the vast majority.

And of utmost importance, the traditional diet of Cubans has been altered. Government promotion of non-traditional Cuban foods such as eggs and spaghetti (in great supply) has resulted in a diet not indigenous to Cubans and therefore less than satisfying. The Mariel boatlift of some 120,000 emigrés to the United States in 1980 jolted Castro and his colleagues, revealing the extent of dissatisfaction with the revolution. Consequently, they eased the food shortage somewhat by creating a "dash of capitalism" in agriculture and, concomitantly, a painful ideological headache for Cuban officials.

Crucial to understanding Cuban life is the fact that rationing becomes a hustle. Long lines at the government stores are complicated by irregular shipments of food. A common practice throughout Cuba is for families to frequent restaurants at the end of the month and slip the cooked food into plastic bags to bring home to prepare multiple meals.

One fifth of the Cuban diet is bought off the ration. Since the late 1970s, government stores have been offering a "parallel market" that offers food at higher prices than the ration. This has enabled higher-income Cubans to supplement their diet. Moreover, after the Mariel boatlift farmers were permitted to sell excess produce and livestock at their own prices. This capitalistic endeavor resulted in high prices and some comparatively rich farmers. In short, Cuban officials are wary of rationing as a permanent way of life; nonetheless, policy is so mired in internal ideological disputes that rationing appears unlikely to be scrapped in the near future.

The authors of *No Free Lunch* conclude that, although hunger is almost non-existent in Cuba, the diet "is far from ideal on a number of counts." The diet is "not particularly healthful," and the lack of variety makes it monotonous. Parenthetically, it might be added that though the U.S. diet is based on large and varied supplies of foodstuffs, it could also be termed not especially healthful. Nonetheless, the difference is that the diet in Cuba "is controlled much more directly by government decisions than in most countries."

Cuba's food shortages are tied to a government emphasis on sugar as the chief crop destined to be exported and to produce the hard foreign currency needed to finance other government projects. In 1958, prior to the revolution, sugar cane production employed 60 percent of the cultivated land. By 1983, that proportion had increased to 75 percent. Moreover, export earnings amounted to approximately 83 percent of the foreign exchange, the same as that in the days prior to the revolution. Cuba is as dependent on one crop, sugar, as it has always been; instead of the United States being the chief client it is now the Soviet Union. This is a precarious economic policy. There is no foreseeable increase in demand for sugar worldwide, at least at current highly subsidized prices. In addition, cheaper substitute sweeteners are fast replacing sugar in processed foods, which actually account for most sugar use. For a nation providing the largest share of the world's market — 28 percent — Cuba is taking a large economic risk in relying on sugar as its main crop.

Why hasn't Cuba diversified? Shortly after the revolution the aim was to do so. Fidel Castro declared that "there is no excuse for the shortage of *viandas* (a popular Cuban vegetable), and we pledge that they will never be scarce again. . . ."

In three years, however, that policy was dropped. Poor harvests caused by bad weather, lack of farm machinery (once supplied by the United States), loss of trained agricultural personnel to exile, and most important, poor planning caused Cuban officials to rethink their policy of planting crops that would make Cuba food sufficient. They faced a balance-of-payments crisis in 1962. Without a large sugar crop for export, Cuba was \$170 million in debt. With a vengeance, Cuba swiftly returned to being a one-crop sugar economy.

A number of policy questions arise. First, the revolutionaries were initially ideologues, for the most part lacking technical backgrounds. Second, policy planning lacked analytical tools in the first decade of the revolution. Cost-benefit analysis lagged a decade behind that in the United States where it was introduced into government planning in the mid-1960s. Cuba attempted to diversify "without any studies of soil, rainfall, climate, or economic prospects, such as demand, transportation, and proximity to markets." And Cuba remains light years from developed countries in using tools for adequate planning. For example, the extremely complicated rationing system requires a huge bureaucracy because it functions without use of computers.

A major instance of poor planning was the heralded 1970 drive to produce ten million tons of sugar for export — the most that Cuba would have ever produced. This goal became "an obsession with Fidel Castro" and a "yardstick of the revolution." More than 1.2 million workers were mobilized from other segments of the economy to produce the targeted goal. The result was that only 8.5 million tons were produced — still a record but under the goal. Moreover, "losses and setbacks to the rest of the economy were staggering"; they "surpassed the gains in sugar production." In short, a vast national campaign was mounted that turned out to be cost ineffective.

Of equal significance is the lack of genuine consumer influence in the policy process. The authors of *No Free Lunch* observe that "political dissent — be it by individual citizens, opposition parties, party caucuses, or in public forums — is severely curbed." Cubans lack the means to register their opinions on national and domestic needs. Which explains why some vote, as Lenin proclaimed, with their feet. Despite miscalculations, however, Fidel Castro appears to be a "Teflon" leader who retains an enormous popularity.

Equally important, Cuban policy in recent years has raised large philosophical problems that go to the root of socialism. Farm cooperatives, for example — where farmers share in the profits — outproduce and are more efficient than large state farms. Farmers producing for profit seem to have more incentive to work and to be efficient than state farm employees working for a wage.

Cuba has made significant progress in education. Yet, in the final analysis, the effectiveness of educational policy is also

mixed. Cuba has provided access — free education to all at the elementary and secondary school level and to those who qualify academically at the university level. This system has dramatically altered the way Cubans go to school. Prior to the revolution, less than half of the eligible elementary students attended school, whereas today approximately 97 percent attend and an outstanding 93 percent graduate after passing national examinations. The turning point comes during the intermediate school years when nearly 27 percent of sixteen-year-olds drop out of school — a figure that still compares favorably with the 45 percent who drop out after that age in urban high schools in the United States. Intermediate school students seem less motivated than those on the elementary level.

Nonetheless, the accomplishments of the revolution in education should not be minimized. First, the Cuban literacy campaign, conducted in 1961 in the afterglow of the revolution, raised the literacy rates from 76 percent, highest in Latin America, to an unprecedented 96 percent of the population.

Jonathan Kozol, who has studied literacy both in Cuba and the United States, estimates that in the United States "44 percent of blacks and 55 percent of Hispanics are either total, functional, or marginal readers." Indeed, a massive national campaign combined with a possible political mega-Hawthorne effect resulted in the only successful major literacy campaign among underdeveloped countries.

On the other hand, attempts at effective schooling after the revolution in the sixties and early seventies were futile. In the sixties, half of the primary school children were grade repeaters and in the intermediate schools only 13 percent of the students graduated. This resulted from a lack of qualified teachers, since many middle-class teachers had left Cuba, and poor student motivation. Reforms initiated in the mid-1970s reversed that trend toward the end of the decade. Chief of these reforms was a program combining work and study whereby students even harvested crops (except for sugar, which involves particularly strenuous work).

There is a great deal of student and parent participation in Cuban education, but neither group is directly involved with policy. Student and parent organizations form an educational infrastructure, which aids school administrators and teachers by stressing student achievement and discipline, and discouraging truancy. Nonetheless, parents have no say in determining school policy as they have at least the potential for doing in the United States through elected school boards.

Cuban education officials cite their most pressing problems to be the need to improve teacher quality and to obtain more supplies. Indeed, at a time when the neighborhood United States public school is installing mini-computers, the lack of classroom supplies in Cuba, especially in science classes, is painful. Still, outside of the military and health systems, education receives the most money. Other social needs, such as housing, receive lower priority.

Perhaps the strongest criticism that can be made of the Cuban educational system is that it is stiflingly meritocratic. Students proceed from one level to the next on past academic

performances. Only the most academically proficient can hope to attend the university. This meritocratic system, of course, is not unique to Cuba; most socialist countries and many developed Western nations such as France and West Germany boast such systems. In a nation with limited resources, Cuban officials believe that meritocracy is the only fair method of selecting students for a free higher education. On the other hand, we are learning in the United States that people increasingly pursue more than one career in a lifetime, and universities are attracting "non-traditional" students who come to college at a later stage in life. Meritocracy rewards early achievers and penalizes late bloomers. Even Marx did poorly in history early in school.

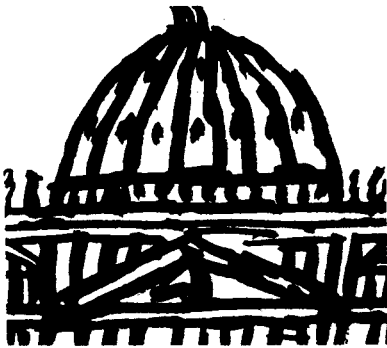
The greatest success of the Cuban Revolution has been in health. The health care system — free to all — has raised the level of health among Cubans. Indeed, the ten leading causes of death in Cuba now resemble those of a developed country. Tropical diseases afflicting people in Latin America, such as typhoid, malaria, polio, and gastroenteritis were brought under control. A study conducted by the United Nations Committee on Technology and Development in 1979 concludes "that the health of the average Cuban has improved

during the nearly two decades that have elapsed since the coming to power of the revolutionary government."

Even this success has drawbacks. The authors of the UNCTAD study did not recommend the Cuban health system as a model for underdeveloped countries because of its high cost. In developed countries, cost has supplanted quality as the dominant policy issue. In Britain and the United States, for example, certain policy analysts are recommending curtailing some health services because of limited resources. Cuban officials are justly proud of their health-care system, but they are paying dearly for this right to health.

In the final analysis, Cuba must be judged by the standards of other underdeveloped Latin American countries. In some areas of social policy — notably health and education — Cuba is fast approaching the status of a developed nation. How can such policy advances be evaluated in relationship to the Cubans' lack of political freedom? Ultimately, one has to face that question. It raises the issue not only of a "trade-off" between political freedom and gains in social policy but also of the bearing that limits on freedom have on the nature and process of policy. In the end, one cannot separate the political matrix from the social policy developed within it.

WHY THE 'NOTES' WERE DISAPPOINTING



Jews & Catholics: taking stock

JUDITH BANKI &
ALAN L. MITTLEMAN

ON JUNE 24, 1985 — twenty years after the historic conciliar "Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*) — the Vatican issued a set of "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church." Immediately, the "Notes" drew sharp criticism from leading Jewish organizations. Their reception was accompanied by acute disappointment. Why did the Jewish leaders react in so critical a manner? An educated reader of an article in the *New York Times* (June 25), noting that the Vatican statement emphasizes the "Jewish roots of Chris-

tianity," condemns anti-Semitism, and calls for "objectivity, justice, and tolerance" might well have asked, "What in the world do the Jews want?"

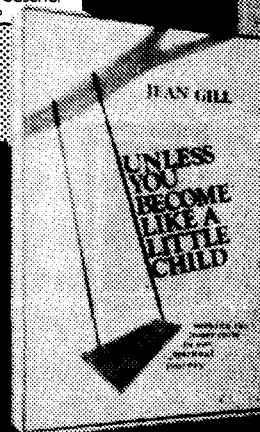
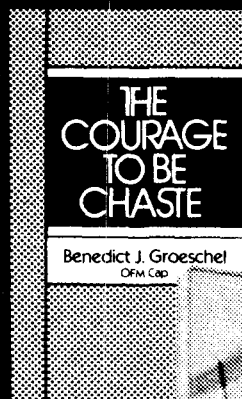
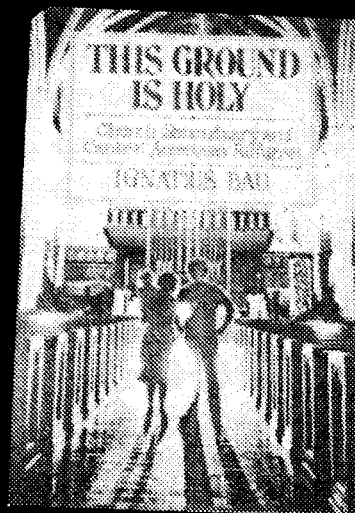
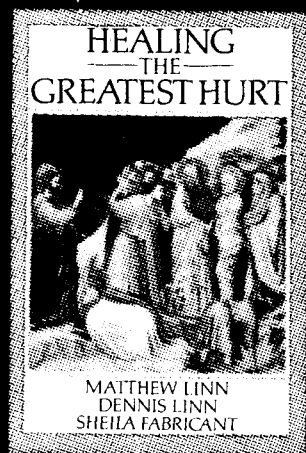
What, indeed? The question can only be answered by understanding both the long and potent tradition of Christian anti-Semitism and the progress made in recent decades in confronting and correcting the teachings which fed that tradition. After World War II, provocative theological works by the Jewish scholar Jules Isaac and by Catholics such as Paul Demann set the stage for a searching reconsideration of fundamental issues. The 1950s and 1960s saw the undertaking, through the initiative of the American Jewish Committee, of landmark Protestant and Catholic textbook "self-studies" in the United States and Europe which documented the extent of anti-Jewish prejudice in teaching materials. The consolidation of these trends into a directed international movement for change in Catholic-Jewish relations occurred during the Second Vatican Council.

The council set forth the great themes of a new encounter between Catholics, indeed between all Christians, and Jews.

(Continued on page 466)

JUDITH BANKI is associate national director of the The American Jewish Committee and the editor of the Committee's Inter-religious Newsletter. RABBI ALAN L. MITTLEMAN is program specialist of interreligious affairs for The American Jewish Committee. Both have written widely on various aspects of Jewish-Christian relations.

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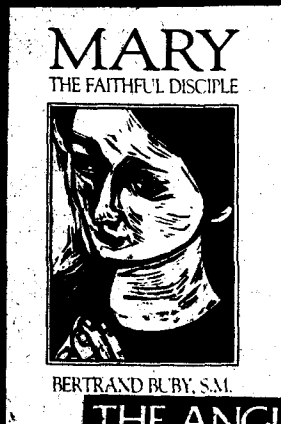
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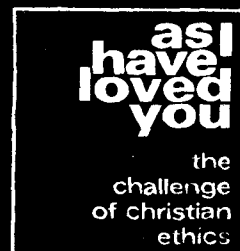
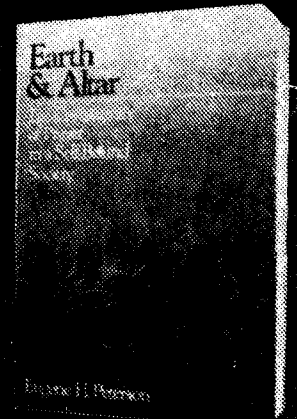
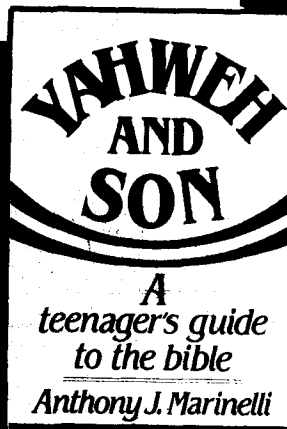
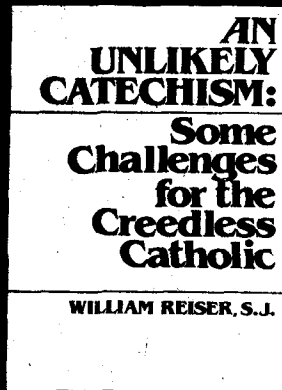
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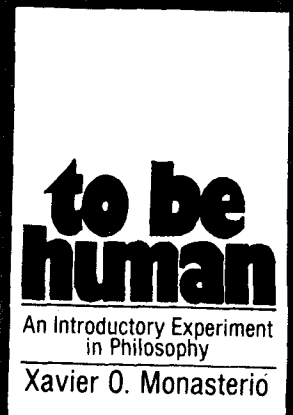


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Nostra Aetate affirms that "Abraham's stock" and the "people of the New Covenant" are not strangers to one another, rather they are linked by a mysterious "spiritual bond." The church continually "draws sustenance" from the root that is the people Israel. Given this abiding linkage, this common "spiritual patrimony," the council urged that "mutual respect and understanding" prevail. It envisioned that such respect would flow from joint biblical and theological studies and "brotherly dialogues."

The council laid out some principles which greatly facilitated the pursuit of these goals. First, it affirmed that the death of Jesus "cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today." "The Jews should not be presented as rejected or cursed by God. . . ." In one decisive sweep, the council rejected the pernicious, misconceived accusation of deicide which, more than any other misconception, led to Christendom's legacy of fratricide.

The council also took note of the Jewishness of Jesus and of the founders of early Christianity. Attention to the Jewish foundations of the church — a fact too easily obscured in the course of history — provided fertile subject matter for the joint-scholarly ventures recommended by the council.

These were auspicious beginnings. Although *Nostra Aetate* was significantly weaker in its final text than in earlier drafts, it nevertheless initiated a process which has forged a new Catholic tradition vis à vis Jews and Judaism. The tender shoots of this new tradition have emerged from dialogues, conferences, and scholarly studies; they have been nourished by networks of ongoing communication. Its fruits are evident in powerful declarations of national episcopal conferences, including the French, the Swiss, the American, the German, and the Brazilian.

Obviously, one cannot do justice to the depth and range of these disparate statements, forged over the course of almost twenty years; but they went further than *Nostra Aetate* in empathy and historical sensitivity and, taken together, reflect trends enormously heartening to Jews: a genuine expression of esteem for Jews and Judaism; a call for Christians to listen to how Jews define themselves; an admission of the anti-Judaic legacy of Christian theology and a commitment to reformulations; a call for Catholics to understand Jewish attachment to the State of Israel and the religious significance of Israel for Jews (while not necessarily accepting these positions as their own); a vision of Catholics and Jews as two pilgrim peoples "on the march." Added to this roster of progress, at least two study papers, probing theological aspects of Catholic-Jewish relations, suggested that the church should abandon efforts to convert Jews. A 1973 study paper of the National Catholic Commission for Relations with the Jews, Belgium, declared: "To insist that the church has taken the place of the Jewish people as salvific institution is a facile interpretation. . . . The Jewish people is the true relative of the Church, not her rival or a minority to be assimilated." A 1977 Vatican study paper by Professor Thomasso Frederici also renounced proselytization understood as coercion or manipulation and spelled out the church's commitment to dialogue. These study papers

were not doctrinally authoritative, but they seemed to point to the direction in which Catholic theological thought was developing.

Against this background, and on the basis of their own experience in Catholic-Jewish dialogue, Jews had every reason to expect that the Vatican "Notes" would be an unambiguous step forward toward mutual recognition as well as mutual esteem. Indeed, the "Notes" do make several steps in the right direction, but they also appear to take more than a few steps backward.

ONE OF THE considerable frustrations in evaluating this document lies in its schizoid nature. From a Jewish perspective, progressive affirmations in one section are undercut by regressive formulations in other sections. Inherently contradictory theological views of Judaism are papered over by expressions of noble intention. Speculation as to how the "Notes" were formulated, edited, and finalized is, perhaps, fruitless, but the document appears to reflect a tug-of-war between two incompatible mind-sets towards Jews.

On the positive side, the "Notes" affirm that "the Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in catechesis: Their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated." This "presence" is not that of a relic: Jews are a "still living reality," whose permanence in history, "accompanied by a continuous, spiritual fecundity," is "a sign to be interpreted within God's design." The acknowledgement of the vital, faithful existence of the Jews from antiquity to modern times is an important corrective to earlier teachings.

The section on the Jewish roots of Christianity should be particularly helpful to teachers and preachers. The "Notes" describe formative Judaism as a rich, diversified religion within which Jesus' life and work find a natural home. The historical record is set straight on the much maligned Pharisees. Beliefs and practices which Jesus and Paul shared with the Pharisees are specified in detail. If Jesus is severe toward them, "it is because he is closer to them than to other contemporary Jewish groups." The "Notes" make plain that many of the anti-Jewish references of the Gospels "have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent church and the Jewish community . . . long after the time of Jesus." Without doubt, this framework is a valuable step forward in



Catholic-Jewish relations. Although these themes appear in earlier documents, the "Notes" develop them in an intensive and heuristic way.

What is given by one hand, however, is taken back by the other. Almost every attempt in the "Notes" to provide some independent theological space for Jews and Judaism is countered by the reassertion of a traditional stance with which the new insights seem to be incompatible. Thus, in one section, "the permanence of Israel" is providential ("a sign to be interpreted within God's design"); in another, "Church and Judaism cannot then be seen as two parallel ways of salvation and the church must witness to Christ as the redeemer of all. . . ." The "Notes" clearly assert that Israel "remains a chosen people." But if one searches them to find in what Jewish chosenness consists, only one explicit reason is given: "to prepare the coming of Christ . . . notwithstanding their difficulty in recognizing in him their Messiah." (Much evidence of good will in the "Notes" notwithstanding, this preparatory function is the only reason explicitly given for Catholics "to appreciate and love" Jews.) Reflective of the same approach, the complex parting of the ways between the young church and the Jews is reduced to a simple "sad fact": the failure of Jews to believe in Jesus.

In one section, Jewish and Christian liturgical practices are compared in a balanced and objective manner: "Christians and Jews celebrate the Passover: the Jews, the historic Passover looking toward the future; the Christians, the Passover accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ . . ." Fair enough. In another section, however, "the Exodus . . . represents an experience of salvation and liberation that is not complete in itself. . . . Salvation and liberation are already accomplished in Christ and gradually realized by the sacraments in the church." Is this a statement that transmits Jewish self-understanding to Catholics?

After stating that Jews should "define themselves in the light of their own religious experience," the "Notes" immediately proceed to define the Jews in the light of traditional categories (e.g. promise and fulfillment) which tie Judaism to a procrustean bed of theological suppositions. By implication Judaism is presented as a failed religion. Judaism fails to save its adherents, fails to understand its Scriptures, fails to accept its Messiah. Its central and formative events (e.g. the Exodus) are incomplete. These manifestations of supersessionism subvert the intention of the "Notes" to learn and teach how the Jews define themselves, and reflect a strong triumphalist cast. It is no wonder that Jews expressed disappointment with the document.

What is most disappointing about the "Notes" is precisely their failure to convey to Catholics "those essential traits" by which the Jews define themselves. The two great orienting events of modern Jewish experience — the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel — are given short shrift. The "Notes" appear to empty both events of a possible religious meaning for Christians. Moreover, what is unique to Judaism and to Jewish experience tends to get smothered by the "Notes" under the blanket of our "common spiritual pat-

rimony." In an otherwise excellent passage calling for cooperation in the pursuit of social justice, human rights, and international reconciliation, Jews and Christians are said to have "one same memory and one common hope in him who is master of history." Without prejudice to whatever we may share in hope, Jews have a very different memory from Catholics. As Rev. Edward Flannery has said, Jews have learnt by heart those pages which Christians have torn from their history books.

These substantive problems aside, what probably most distressed the Jewish partners-in-dialogue with the Vatican commission was the lack of opportunity to respond to the "Notes" prior to their publication. Not all, but many of the objections to the document might have been resolved had there been consultation. In an attempt to calm troubled waters, Msgr. Jorge Mejia, Secretary of the Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, issued a press statement concurrently with the publication of the "Notes." He specifically denied that the "Notes" intend to depict the Jewish people as superseded: "Of course, they can and should . . . draw salvific gifts from their own traditions." In an empathetic and forthright statement on the Holocaust, he noted its significance for Christians as well as for Jews. These clarifications are helpful; it's a pity they weren't part of the original document.

How will the "Notes" affect the progress of Catholic-

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Jewish relations? As with previous documents, much will depend on how they are implemented. Clearly, they provide rich opportunities for new advances in education and new insights in preaching. Do they also, as some Jews fear, represent a retreat to a pre-Vatican II theology of Jews and Judaism? The latter would seem unlikely in the light of two decades of scholarly advance and human interaction, but there are enough suggestions toward doctrinal retrenchment in the "Notes" to justify Jewish concern.

Screen

LIVING DEAD

EASTWOOD & THE YUPPIES

CLINT EASTWOOD's *Pale Rider* is a stiff. The major question at its release was whether or not it could "revive the Western," one of Hollywood's currently moribund genres. No one, perhaps, expected how literal Eastwood's attempt at revivification would be. The film, which Eastwood wrote and directed himself, attempts artificial respiration by breathing new life into the plots of several past masterpieces, particularly *Shane* and *High Noon*. But the effort fails and the result is a corpse — somber, imposing, and lifeless.

Appropriately perhaps, a corpse also dominates the plot of *Pale Rider*. Less through dialogue than cinematography, the suggestion is persistently made that the central character, Eastwood's "mysterious stranger," has returned to life as a quasi-religious avenger (sometimes garbed as a preacher) to punish past misdeeds of the film's villains. Eastwood rides down from the mountains at the opening of *Pale Rider*, and ascends the mountains at the end; throughout, with contrived camera shots, he seems to materialize from the thin Sierra air itself. When Eastwood first reaches a camp of poor, honest miners under siege from local thugs, his approach is prefaced by a reading from Apocalypse on the "pale horseman named Death" — hence, the title of the film. *Pale Rider* is no ordinary shoot-em-up; it does reach for a "message" beyond sheer action. But while ascending the high ridge that separates hokey mysticism from true grandeur, Eastwood loses traction.

Eastwood's pastiche of previous films produces more boredom than tension. For example, in evoking *Shane* and *High Noon*, he borrows the grit of their heroes but none of their sense of conflict or doubt about the eventual outcome of their battles. From *High Noon*, Eastwood steals frequent shots of ominous-looking railroad tracks, and a closing gunfight sequence where, much like Gary Cooper, his mysterious stranger uses the nooks and crannies of a Western town to outwit a gang of bad guys. There is none of Cooper's fear, however, which gave his silent bravery its nervy edge. From *Shane*, Eastwood borrows the core of his plot, transforming its struggle of nesters versus ranchers to a conflict between folksy

miners and a big-time capitalist trying to monopolize land claims. But Eastwood's mysterious stranger shares none of Alan Ladd's reluctance to take up guns to solve the issue. In short, Eastwood plagiarizes from the classics but shortchanges the humanity of the characters.

Even his innovations make this evident, particularly the substitution of a young woman (Sydney Penney) for the little boy whose heartfelt cry, "Shane, come back!" provided one of the most powerful and ambiguous conclusions to any Western. In *Shane* the pathos of this scene rests on the child's intuitive understanding that his mother had fallen in love with the mysterious stranger. In *Pale Rider*, however, this subtlety is lost: with the young woman, as well as her mother (Carrie Snodgrass), in love with Eastwood, there is no ambivalence toward him, only a kind of universal sexual worship.

The on-location cinematography by Bruce Surtees is often superb. With the late autumnal footage of golden aspens and the constant shag rug of early snow, many scenes are enough to chill one to the bone. On the other hand, there is too frequent use of chiaroscuro to contrast good and evil for the sake of the parable; during some prolonged night-time takes, the film is simply hard to see. One is forced to strain — like the miners, apparently — to read the intentions of the mysterious stranger. But this crude example of the imitative fallacy merely underscores the inflated seriousness, almost narcissism, in which Eastwood cloaks his hero.

In truth, what *Pale Rider* lacks most is mystery, or at least some uncertainty, about the hero's powers. Eastwood can convey depth, unlike some of the strong-and-silent actors now popular (Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris, or Arnold Schwarzenegger); he is able to project interiority, if only by seeming to embody an outrage that he is honor-bound to avenge. With stylized gestures and menacing glances, Eastwood preserves in *Pale Rider* the feel of the samurai film on which his earlier "spaghetti Westerns" (*High Plains Drifter*, or *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*) were based. Here he also does a classic samurai bit with a hickory stick. But he has written himself into a position of stale omnipotence. His victory is so predictable, the film lacks any suspense. The only pleasure it can provide is the fun of watching the bad guys get it.

Eastwood has made a second career for himself in recent years by providing such pleasure in his "Dirty Harry" series of detective films (*Dirty Harry*, *Magnum Force*, and *Tightrope*), but their electricity is missing in *Pale Rider*, perhaps for an ironic reason. What gave these films power was the brutal, half-truthful way that they pointed out the defects of contemporary jurisprudence. Dirty Harry regularly collared sadistic thugs sprung from jail by lenient judges and hired-gun defense lawyers. When he held his .38 to the skull of one such lawbreaker ("Go ahead, make my day," Dirty Harry dared), Eastwood struck a very raw American nerve.

The "mysterious stranger" in *Pale Rider* expresses invincibility not anger, and his passionlessness belies the film's attempt to moderate Eastwood's political image. On the surface, *Pale Rider* is populist, with Eastwood rousing the small-time miners to protect their economic rights against

monopoly. Indeed, there are even anachronistic digs against "rape of the land" by the large operator's hydraulic pumps. Nevertheless, the film presents the establishment of justice in the old West as an inevitable process. Struggle and peril are missing. The film's tone implies that economic exploitation *has been taken care of*. Like the film's style and content, its political theme is presented as stiffly as a corpse.

S*T. ELMO'S FIRE* is a portrait of seven well-to-do recent college graduates trying to find themselves somewhere amid sex, drugs, booze, and Washington. The film reveals three strong urges of contemporary movie makers: first, to imitate the success of *The Big Chill*, with its emphasis on individual-cum-group growth and revaluation; second, to exploit the marketability of its young "stars"; and third, to tailor a product to fit an audience demographically defined. The makers of *St. Elmo's Fire*, like many politicians, seem more concerned about finding something to fit the narcissism of a particular group than addressing an interesting idea to an audience with lively minds.

Worse, *St. Elmo's Fire* fails even on its own limited terms. Aside from one or two passages, there are no specific links between the challenges the characters face and their age and situation; no reflections on what it really means to be a recent college graduate — what blind ambition, ambivalences or holding patterns that might imply. In short, the major premise of the film goes unexplored. What remains is drugs and sex — problems as evident on campus or among alumni, as among recent graduates. *St. Elmo's Fire* thus blatantly dis-serves the audience it was meant to address.

As a result, the social satire in *St. Elmo's Fire* is diploma thin. One young Democrat (Judd Nelson) becomes a young Republican out of a desire, we are supposed to believe, for a longer sofa. A young would-be writer (Andrew McCarthy) aspires through the length of the film ("labors" would be too strong a term) to print an article on "the meaning of life"; at the end, we are told, he succeeds (find me his editor!). One WASPy-looking young woman (Mare Winningham) supposedly belongs to a Jewish family including a stereotypical, materialistic father (Martin Balsam). The film's one black is a hooker. The Washington setting — an apt place if one wishes to examine "yuppie" attitudes — here functions as a passive background.

Apologists for the film (a big summer money winner) claim that its sole purpose is to showcase its ensemble of young "stars." Long ago, H.L. Mencken warned of democratic tendencies toward linguistic inflation (see his discussion of garbagemen et al as "sanitary engineers" in *The American Language*). Names like Ally Sheedy, Rob Lowe, and Demi Moore hardly belong in the same class as Betty Davis, or even (maybe) Meryl Streep. The very brevity of their names, or nicknames, betrays them. They're simply the heavyweights of Lite culture, the demigods for the many Keri's and Shari's and Staci's and Seans so dear to a studio's "heart."

At times, *St. Elmo's Fire* is forgivable for its sin of celebrating callow youth with a callow screenplay. There are

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winning scenes of devil-may-care youthful exuberance, and touching scenes of friendship. Toward the end, the group even puts aside its enormous collective ego to prevent a suicide. It thus shares an important theme of its "parent," *The Big Chill*, but only to underline a difference. In the earlier film, the suicide comes first (the corpse is being dressed for the funeral during the credits). *The Big Chill* served as a prolonged wake

in which the self-indulgence of the characters could be viewed in an initially tragic context. In *St. Elmo's Fire*, there is little to provide depth to the characterization, neither in death, nor, simply, the passage of time in growth to adulthood. *St. Elmo's Fire* borrows a formula but lacks an ingredient: a sense of the real stakes in living, in growing, in time.

TOM O'BRIEN

Books: THE AUTOPSY OF YOUR CHOICE

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY is "morally, spiritually, and intellectually dead." So says Richard M. Koster a long-time member of the party's National Committee. He goes on despairingly, "It's just lying here like a piece of hamburger on the griddle." Who is going to reshape this doleful patty? If recent developments are any indication, the Democrats are likely to turn to motivation and marketing experts. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) has just hired Phillip Kotler, a marketing expert from Northwestern University, to do a massive poll in order to find out what the party ought to think. According to a spokesman for DNC Chairman Paul Kirk, the Democratic leadership will not even have a role in formulating the questions to be asked. "We're not even making the assumption that we know what questions to ask anymore."

Who is responsible for this sad state of affairs? To read either *Wake Us When It's Over: Presidential Politics of 1984*, written by veteran journalists Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, or *The Quest for the Presidency 1984*, written by a team of *Newsweek* reporters led by Peter Goldman and Tony Fuller, you would have to believe that the blame lies squarely on the shoulders of Walter Mondale and the ever-dying New Deal tradition. The tablets brought down from the New Deal by the prophet Roosevelt, we are solemnly told, have finally been broken! But this is the same "news" we have received in the aftermath of every election since 1972. The fact is that the New Deal party with its core of Northern working people and white Southerners has long ceased to exist. A few stalwarts like Tip O'Neill aside, the party Walter

WAKE US WHEN IT'S OVER

PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS OF 1984

Jack Germond & Jules Witcover
Macmillan, \$19.95, 567 pp.

THE QUEST FOR THE PRESIDENCY 1984

Peter Goldman & Tony Fuller
A *Newsweek* Book, Bantam, \$17.95,
468 pp.

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Mark Shields
An Algonquin Book, Chapel Hill, \$5.95
paper, 108 pp.

CANARSIE

THE JEWS AND ITALIANS OF BROOKLYN
AGAINST LIBERALISM

Jonathan Rieder
Harvard University, \$22.50, 290 pp.

Fred Siegel

Mondale led is a product of the McGovern campaign and the Carter years, when liberals maintained their post-New Deal peace with big business while the administration was staffed below the top level almost entirely by representatives of the New Politics.

Groups that were once at the periphery of the party like blacks and women are now among its core constituencies. But they retain the habits of insurgency which brought them to prominence. Having earned their rightful place in the party's inner ranks by successfully picking fights to demonstrate their clout, they spent the 1984 campaign shadowboxing with their own rhetoric.

The reasons for the Democrats' failure

is plain to see. They've been unable to hold onto their old friends while making new ones. A party can try to win either by drawing in all those around its fringe or by trying to massively mobilize its core. In 1976 when the Democrats won, Jimmy Carter interviewed for vice-president a group of broadly representative politicians of national stature like Frank Church, Henry Jackson, and Edmund Muskie. In 1984 the politicians Mondale interviewed for vice-president were representatives of the party's balkanized constituencies, none of them yet having attained a broad appeal or national stature. Misled by interest-group activists, the Democrats have consistently tried to win by bringing out the "hidden vote," first of youth in 1972, of blacks in 1980, and of women in 1984. They've failed each time.

There was for example, no secret women's vote in 1984 despite all the books and articles explaining how women would defeat Ronald Reagan. But it's one thing for women's groups to push their agenda and another for the party to swallow it whole. Why, when the numbers obviously ran the other way, did the Democrats deceive themselves? Between 1976 and 1980, well before the Republicans' appeal to men could be misexplained in terms of Reagan's macho qualities, Republican support among men jumped 8 points. There was a gender gap in 1980 all right. Reagan won the male vote by 19 points, the female by 5. In 1984, with Geraldine Ferraro on the ticket, the women's vote for the Democrats *dropped* 3 points while the Republicans surged by 10. The very idea of the gender gap on the national level was based on two misconceptions. First of all

it failed to note that statistical measures of Democratic support among women reflected the extraordinary party attachment of black women, a loyalty that is quite real but which cannot be projected to the female voters in general or attributed to "women's" issues; and it ignored the differences between married women who tend to be more Republican and single women who tend to be more Democratic. In so far as the Democrats had an advantage among non-black women voters it was with young unmarried professionals, the group most actively involved in the Democratic party's system of interest-group caucuses.

Neither the Germond/Witcover nor the Goldman/Fuller accounts, though they are 567 and 468 pages respectively, takes up the problem of the Democrats' self-deceptions. Germond and Witcover are almost exclusively preoccupied with exposing the pseudo-reality of media-based campaigns. (Their book on the 1980 election was entitled *Blue Smoke and Mirrors*.) "The real losers" in the election, Germond and Witcover argue, "were the people of the United States. . . . They had settled for an empty contest of images on the television screens that told them essentially nothing about the decisions that would be made for their future."

For the Democrats, the proliferation of primaries, set off by the McGovern reforms, and the decay of the local party machinery have produced a mad scramble for media dollars. The Democratic candidates, as Germond and Witcover effectively describe it, threw themselves into meaningless straw polls long before the formal primaries, solely to gain TV coverage which would allow them to raise money in order to buy more TV coverage. The rule changes designed to democratize the party have ended up concentrating power in the hands of media consultants and fund raisers.

So far, so good. Germond and Witcover are on target in their criticism of media-dominated campaigns; but implicit is the unjustified assumption that had Reagan not been the master of the airwaves, Mondale would have been able to win on the issues. Comforting as this notion might be, it is almost certainly

wrong. The idea that people really agreed with Mondale but were bewitched by Reagan's personality is a half-truth elevated to the conventional wisdom. Both the CBS-*New York Times* and the ABC-*Washington Post* polls showed that on the issues of the arms buildup and social fairness Reagan enjoyed large majorities. And most important of all, for the first time since Herbert Hoover, Republicans were heavily favored as the party most capable of managing the economy.

It was also argued that Reagan won because Mondale was uninspiring. This is like saying that a bicycle moves because its wheels turn. Did Nixon win in '72 because he was inspiring? The question is, why did voters prove unwilling to support the Democrats even in the instances where the voters did agree with the party on the issues? The answer goes back to Vietnam when the protesters succeeded in discrediting both the war and their own opposition to it. That set the pattern for the protest movements to follow. The public at one and the same time supported equal rights for women but distrusted feminists, endorsed the freeze

but remained wary of freezniks, and so on. Reform itself had become tainted as both self-interested, in the case of the professionals who lived off it, and extremist in its exotic formulations.

In spite of their deathbed repentance in San Francisco when the Democrats repeatedly evoked family, flag, and religion, the party was unavoidably tainted by its association with professionalized reform. It's not that the Republicans were not seen as serving special interests — they were seen as tools of big business — but it was widely assumed that while prosperity for business would be broadly beneficial, gains for, say, feminists or blacks, would come at someone else's expense. Reagan capitalized on that fear. From his first shot at the California governorship, running against the Berkeley student movement, down to the present, Reagan has made his living off the distrust of professional reformers.

Finally, what is wrong with the blue-smoke-and-mirrors argument is that all the trends have been pointing in a Republican direction since 1966. For nearly twenty years the Democrats have been steadily losing support in the South, in



the West, from white males, from Roman Catholics, and from blue-collar workers. In the ten post-FDR elections the Democrats have been able to win more than 50 percent of the vote only twice. Both times, in '64 and '76, white Southerners were at the head of the ticket, and in '76 Carter just barely got a majority with 50.1 percent of the vote. Similarly, in those same ten post-FDR elections, only once — in 1964 against the clearly crankish campaign of Barry Goldwater — have the Democrats been able to win a majority of the white vote. In 1984 Democrats won only 31 percent of the male vote, 26 percent among white male Protestants. Turning these numbers around has led to the joke that the Republican rainbow is "white, off-white, bone-white, ivory, and French vanilla."

"If only Hart had been the nominee" — or so goes the refrain repeated in Goldman and Fuller's *The Quest for the Presidency 1984* — "then things would have been different." *The Quest for the Presidency 1984* is a collective effort of the *Newsweek* staff which expands on *Newsweek's* special post-election issue. For those interested in family resemblances, however, its provenance may seem more closely related to another *Newsweek* special, its now infamous issue in celebration of the yuppies.

The book is a wide-eyed paean to the notion of generational salvation. The children of the sixties shall lead you, as expounded by Pat Caddell. In fact so much of the book is dedicated to uncritically presenting Caddell's "brilliant" ideas on generational politics — more than 100 of its 455 pages of text are given over to him — that it might be best retitled as *Pat Caddell's History of the 1984 Election as Told by Goodman and Fuller*.

Hart, we are breathlessly informed — imperfect vehicle that he was — could have revived the Democratic party if only those bad old bosses, à la 1968, hadn't stolen the nomination from the rightful Prince.

There are several problems with this analysis. First of all, the very notion of generational politics is deeply flawed. It has been predicted in every election since 1972 that children of the baby boom were

going to transform American politics. It's yet to happen because the baby boom generation is sharply divided. While college-educated youth were rallying to the flag of the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns in 1968, blue-collar youth were the backbone of the Wallace campaign, particularly in the North. Second, the baby boom is divided between those born before 1954, the people of *The Big Chill*, and those born after 1954, who generally didn't take part in the "Great Refusal" of the 1960s and for whom the Hart campaign had a far more limited appeal.

In fact the appeal of the yuppie ethos in general is far more limited than either Goodman and Fuller or their ventriloquist, Caddell, lets on. Advertisers operating on the same broad assumption as the Hart campaign, namely that this yuppie ideal is so attractive as to approximate the American ideal, have recently backed away from making direct appeals to the "Me Generation." They've discovered that for a good deal of the public and even some of the up-scale baby boomers, yuppiehood is synonymous with selfishness, smug self-satisfaction, and unfettered appetite, however refined.

Goodman and Fuller mention John Anderson but once in passing, yet Hart's appeal was virtually identical to that of the 1980 independent presidential candidate. Hart, like Anderson, was the candidate of the East and West coast "Granola Belts" and the professional upper-middle class. But the Democrats, as Mark Shields points out in his witty little book, *On the Campaign Trail*, a collection of his *Washington Post* columns, are a "glandular party that needs to feel emotionally attached to its candidates." Jerry Brown, who also goes unmentioned despite being an obvious prototype for Hart, had the good sense to clutch Cesar Chavez to his political breast when accused of lacking heart. Candidate Hart, a man described as "having been born in law school," lacked either the need or the political savvy to make such a move.

It's unlikely that a Hart candidacy would have done much better than Mondale in the general election, despite the

obvious advantage of not having the Carter albatross around his neck. Polling showed Hart doing only slightly better than Mondale for a simple reason, the Coloradan's almost total lack of appeal to blue-collar and black Democrats. The problems of the campaign were those of a deeply divided party, not a particular candidate.

THE MUTUAL distrust of the Democratic party's competing elements is reflected in its mania for rules. In the absence of trust and mutuality, each group sees itself as vulnerable, except where its privileges are enshrined in the party regulations. This is more than an internal party matter, an "inside the Beltway" problem as Germond and Witcover would put it. A party's self-governance is the best indication the voters get of how it would govern the country at large. Democratic party procedures, with their tortured rules establishing rigid numerical quotas, are an affront to traditional American notions of individualism and pluralism. By insisting on the uniformity of national rules, Democrats not only trample over the political traditions of the various states, the regulations embody the very specter of Big Brother government. As Blaine Kamarek, Mondale's director of delegate selection, has put it, "Setting aside homosexuals as an affirmative action target group may make good sense in California, but it's political suicide in Alabama." Because liberal reformers have insisted on an imposed uniformity regardless of circumstances, she goes on, they "may have lost the ability to accurately reflect grass roots sentiment in the nominating process."

The picture a party presents to the electorate is always set well before the campaign begins, which may be why so much of the commentary in these three books, focusing almost entirely on the mechanics of the race, misses the underlying bases for voting. In fact, campaigns tend to have a very limited impact on the outcome of elections. The position of the candidate, particularly incumbents shortly after their nomination, is almost always virtually identical to their standing on election day. In 1968, for in-

stance, Nixon had 43.4 percent of the vote after getting the nomination, and finished with 43.4 percent. Carter in 1976 moved from 50 percent post-convention to 50.1 on election day. In 1980, after months of campaigning and hundreds of millions of dollars spent on TV ads and consultants, he went from 40 to 41 percent. The only recent exceptions are 1964 and 1972, when the heavily favored incumbents dropped all of two-and-a-half points in the period between the convention and the election, with literally no effect on the outcome. The pattern held true for 1984, an unusual year in that it was virtually a race between two incumbents. Mondale's pollster, Peter Hart, was dismayed to discover that Reagan's standing was unchanged over the last six months of his term. By Labor Day 1984, Hart found that only 5 percent of the electorate remained undecided.

TO UNDERSTAND Reagan's victory, we have to move away from campaign ephemera to what may have been the most important political book of the year, an ethnographic study of a lower-middle-class New York neighborhood, entitled *Canarsie: The Jews and the Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism*.

The author, Jonathan Rieder, is a self-described liberal who is trying to understand why liberalism has fallen into such disrepute in the very kind of union and blue-collar neighborhood that was once at the heart of the Democratic coalition. Since 1960 Rieder explains, "The Jews and Italians of Canarsie have embellished and modified the meaning of liberalism, associating it with profligacy, spinelessness, malevolence, masochism, elitism, fantasy, anarchy, idealism, softness, irresponsibility, and sanctimoniousness." Why?

The short answer is that these people live in proximity to the black underclass. Many of the people of Canarsie have already twice fled from crime and urban blight. They were driven from their beloved Brownsville with its teeming Pitkin Avenue on to East New York and finally to Canarsie where, bordered by still decaying slums, they're determined to make a stand. There are ideological racists among them, but for most, par-

ticularly those Jews with socialist backgrounds, the issues are not so much ideological as a day-to-day pragmatic fear of crime. The overriding issue of violent street crime, says Rieder, produced a "growing disassociation between the principled force of a liberal tradition on the one side and the demands of everyday life on the other." An Orthodox Jew whom Rieder quotes never read Montesquieu to the effect that "in order to have . . . liberty, it is requisite that government be so constituted that one man need not be afraid of another." But like virtually all of his neighbors, this Orthodox Jew "saw the contraction of safe and usable space as a mockery of a liberal society. What good were constitutional rights if danger made it impossible to use them?"

Dismissed as racists, the Canarsians have in fact had a more sophisticated understanding of the underclass than that encompassed by the official liberal pieties. Where liberals have been locked into the sterile formulations of the Kerner Commission, viewing everything simply

in racial terms, Canarsians make a distinction between underclass and middle-class blacks, between, in local parlance, the parasites and the producers. This was a point made by everyone, from conservative Italian Republicans to the remnants of Jewish socialism. Whatever their differences they shared an ethic of accountability and self-reliance deeply at odds with fashionable university notions of environmental exculpation. When asked what should be done to help the underclass, most were in favor of government aid, but they insisted that the key was the revival of the black family, a view again becoming acceptable after having been driven underground for twenty years.

Geraldine Ferraro's response to the Rieder book is emblematic of the Democratic party's ostrich-like posture on the question of the underclass. Given the opportunity to review the book in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, she ducked the issue and talked about how Democrats could unite the country through forward-looking economic policies. But

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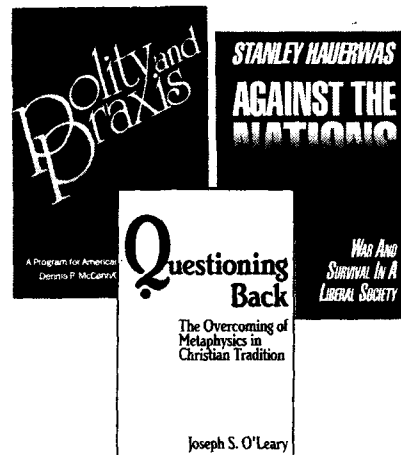
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not even the most ingenious industrial or fiscal policy is likely to reach down to the underclass. More than two-thirds of all black babies in New York are born out of wedlock. Raised in fatherless, desperately poor families, they are victims who in turn victimize others. The children of one of Rieder's respondents, a woman with left-liberal sentiments, were among those victimized. She was pained to discover that black violence at her children's school had made them bigoted. "They tell me 'I hate the niggers.' You see," she explained to herself, "they've had frightening experiences."

The racial dividing line within the Democratic party is by no means confined to New York. The Stanley Greenberg Analysis Group conducted a series of extensive interview sessions with small gatherings of white Michigan Democrats who had voted for Reagan. Initially the groups of voters wandered over a variety of topics — inflation, taxes, economic management. But sooner or later the conversation turned to race. "It would start with one person raising the subject almost apologetically. Then it just opened up. People would

start telling stories of how opportunities in their lives had been blocked by special privileges given blacks — promotions they didn't get, small business loans they didn't qualify for. And once they started you could hardly stop them." Greenberg concluded: "Democratic defectors have deeply felt racial sentiments that are formative of their views of government and the Democratic party. This underlying racial feeling infuses everything they think about government and party." Greenberg subsequently discovered that in-depth polling around the country turned up similar results.

The Republicans have no reason to face up to the problem of racial division. Not only do they attract few black voters, they are indirectly political beneficiaries of the underclass's impoverishment and violence, which has driven former Democrats into their arms. For the past quarter-century Democrats were told that the party's mission of racial justice was essential for America's survival as a free nation. That is as true now as when it was first said. What is different is that the survival of the Democratic party on the national stage is now at stake as well.

The quiche & the dead

LOVE ALWAYS

Ann Beattie

Random House, \$16.95, 247 pp.

Steven G. Kellman

CHILLY *Scenes of Winter* (1976), *Falling in Place* (1981), and, especially, her finely tuned short fiction established Ann Beattie as the bard of the Baby Boomers. With *Love Always*, the boom has gone bust. I am willing enough to suspend my disbelief, but not over a chasm of cuteness.

We are asked to believe that a disillusioned generation that no longer subscribes to anything has suddenly found indispensable a trendy new weekly called *Country Daze*. The magazine is edited in rural Vermont by a charismatic cad named Hildon, with a little help from his

madcap friends. Principal among his assistants and his friends is Lucy Spenser, who writes a column of amorous counsel under the pseudonym Cindi Coeur. It is difficult to say which is more fatuous: the advice Cindi Coeur bestows, or the requests for advice she fabricates. A letter she attributes to "A Worried Mom" laments that her son insists she pack a whole tuna in his lunch box, and Cindi's solution is to give him quiche. Neither is credible or hilarious.

Les Whitehall has just walked out on Lucy. Maureen is walking out on Hildon. Maureen is Hildon's wife. Lucy and Hildon have been lovers for many years. (Beattie writes this way, in minimalist prose allergic to connectives and subordinate clauses).

When Lucy receives a call from her sister Jane, it changes her summer. Jane is sending her fourteen-year-old daughter

ter, the famous child actress Nicole Nelson, to spend her vacation with Lucy in Vermont. Nicole is universally adulated as a star of the soap opera *Passionate Intensity*. With the coaching of her Hollywood agent Piggy Proctor, she is precociously savvy, though conversational references to Jonah, Gary Hart, and Juilliard leave her puzzled.

Love Always is replete with questionable gags like a blind bartender who pours perfect drinks, a dog named St. Francis who kills sheep, and a deranged feminist who terrorizes a boutique. It includes a joke about Alzheimer's disease and half-witticisms about how "every Nathan's hot dog was actually a dehydrated roast beef" and how Piggy "used non sequiturs the way other people shook salt on their food."

Beattie is, as always, attentive to the nuances of social definition: the contents of Maureen's medicine cabinet ("Dalmane, patent medicine, Valium, and Tylenol with codeine"), the magazines Hildon reads ("the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic*, *Time*, *Geo*, *Connoisseur*, *Paris Review*, and *Architectural Digest*"), a pompous writer's credits ("ghostwriter of *Puts and Calls for Fun and Profit*, author of *Mazie*, the *Mouse Who Came to Stay*, and *I Will Always Love You*, the unauthorized biography of Dolly Parton"). But her admirable eye for the telling detail has unfortunately developed a squint; the precious details accumulated in this novel do not tell us as much as they pretend to.

Myra DeVane, a newspaper reporter assigned to do a piece on *Country Daze* and its whole slick crew, is, like the reader, an outsider. But, unlike this reader, she actually ends up being seduced by a couple of them. Myra, it turns out, is also spiritually one of them: "If you couldn't ignore things, making a joke seemed a feasible alternative. She couldn't have agreed more with the *Country Daze* philosophy." Nor, apparently, could *Love Always*. The novel, like Lucy Spenser, suffers from "a morbid fascination with being facile." Myra believes, "It was easy to turn things into a comedy," but both she and her author might do well to consult Dante.

A chapter in which we accompany two

inept policemen in their patrol car to a McDonald's offers diversion from the novel's preoccupation: the affluent and educated somewhat midway in their lives' journey. Theirs is a world of relationships, hence a very fragile world. Changes do not always occur as violently as they do two-thirds of the way through this book, but they always occur. To avoid flipping out, Beattie and her characters practice the ancient discipline of flippancy.

Piggy is astonished to learn that Nicole's TV show *Passionate Intensity* derives its title from a line in Yeats's "The Second Coming": "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." At its best, *Love Always* lacks the conviction of its de-

spair. It simply does not earn its abundant ironies. Characters flit into and out of one another's lives, yet, in the case of Les, perversely sign their letters "Love Always." The effect is so sardonic it risks being sentimental.

Plato cautioned about the perils of mimesis, and our mothers warned that if you make grotesque faces the wind will freeze you in the pose. We are what we mimic, and *Love Always* is indistinguishable from the style it mocks — smart but not sage. A weather report from a rapidly shifting front is not enduring art. Perhaps it is unfair or officious to ask whether a book will be read in ten or fifty years. But *Love Always* is not the book by which Ann Beattie will want to be known.

Chronicle of extinction

SEA OF SLAUGHTER

Farley Mowat
Atlantic Monthly Press,
\$24.95, 438 pp.

Tom O'Brien

ANIMALS have always become extinct: only now they do so more rapidly. Such is the blunt thesis of Farley Mowat's *Sea of Slaughter*, a study of the

man-made extinction of fish, bird, and mammal species in the northwest North Atlantic, once one of the richest zoological paradises on earth.

Mowat knows the region and subject well. He has written almost thirty books, most of them concerned with the people, the geology, the fauna, and flora of northeast North America, especially the Canadian maritime provinces. Although somewhat unknown here — except as a

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biologist whose real life adventure was the basis of the movie, *Never Cry Wolf* — Mowat is one of the most widely read authors in the world, with translations of almost all his books into Russian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, and other languages of nations sharing an Arctic border. His is a world of lunar tundra and outcrop rock, gnarled roots, twisted trees, and, underneath the somber appearance, the north's "reckless prodigality with that sacred and precious thing called life."

In *Sea of Slaughter*, Mowat writes a sad history of life's disappearance. Here he expands beyond his usual animal subjects, wolves and whales, to document a more general "biocide": the regional extinction or near-extinction of shorebirds, fresh and salt water game fish, and supposed oddities such as the Eastern buffalo and grizzly. Each chapter covers the history of one such animal in the region between Labrador and Nantucket — the

REVIEWERS

FRED SIEGEL, *author of Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan, is working on a study of the collapse of American liberalism.*

STEVEN G. KELLMAN, *professor of comparative literature at the University of Texas, is the author of The Self-Begetting Novel (Columbia University).*

TOM O'BRIEN *is Commonweal's film critic.*

early astonished sightings of European explorers amazed at the numbers and newness of the creatures, the rapacious early assaults with sophisticated technology, and the first stirrings of environmentalist attempts to check the killing, often not quite in time.

Mowat has a knowing love of animals. In previous books this is expressed in dramatic accounts of close encounters between himself and a single species. In *Sea of Slaughter*, however, Mowat has a far more complex story to tell. Nevertheless, he spices his massive history of "biocide" with plenty of personal touches that enliven his scholarship and make it readable. His first youthful adventures with polar bears provide an apt prelude for his chapter on the animal; in a later essay on the sea otter Mowat recounts the playfulness of an otter now living near his Cape Breton home. His later research and field work for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to save the harp seal also provides relief from the dark numbers of deaths he documents. Mowat also begins most chapters with an idiosyncratic account of the evolution of an animal's name; to him, the extinct North American penguin is the "spearbill" (from the Basque "arponaz"); the curlew is known by its Eskimo name of "swiftwings." It is difficult to bring personal poetry to

such a book, but Mowat manages.

Sea of Slaughter is also spiced with strong personal passion against some humans — indeed, Mowat initially accepts the label of misanthropy. But the core of his protest has less to do with use of animals than excess. It's one thing to hunt an animal, Mowat claims, but another to exterminate a class of being. As Mowat points out, humans have lived with a large variety of species for millennia, and so-called primitives have done so fairly harmoniously. Before the Western invasion of the northwest North Atlantic, for example, none of the numerous species he names were anywhere near disappearance. If the trends of the last five hundred years continue, however, it will take a second creation to bring them back into being. The threat, as Mowat shows, is complicated; often species are imperiled not by direct killing but by elimination of their prey in the food chain.

But Mowat's ire goes beyond the issue of extinction. He is also concerned about the vastness of the destruction — "a massive diminution of the entire body of animate creation" — even when no species is threatened with extermination as a result. Much of his history is filled with eyewitness recitations of slaughter that serves no purpose, not even human greed and certainly not survival; often many of the dead carcasses of hunted animals are left to rot. He makes clear, especially in his chapter on the harp seal, that this waste is intensified by an additional delight in the killing; one telling vignette documents how Mowat and other IFAW workers were forbidden from mercy-killing a harp seal after it had supposedly been clubbed to death and was in the process of being skinned alive. His case against these diverse evils — extinction, waste, and sadism — is not finally misanthropic, but built on the perception that "life is indivisible." The three dangers are not just posed by humans, in his view, but to humans as well.

Mowat is a great popularizer. In his other works he has been able to take complicated notions from biology and anthropology and domesticate them with a thoroughly involved, but informative style. *Sea of Slaughter* provides some

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heavier reading; the weight in the progression of chapters starts to build through the book like a dirge. Nevertheless, it may help to focus the burgeoning animal rights movement in this country and abroad. The cause has no more eloquent spokesperson.

A postscript: Mowat recently gained more notoriety when he was denied entrance into the United States to promote this book on the grounds, said a humorless State Department official, that he associated with Communists and anarchists and made threats against the American military. As for the latter, he once jokingly said he'd like to shoot down a SAC bomber (on regular patrol over his house in Ontario) with his .22. As for the former, he toured Russia to write *The Siberians*, and has friends in Greenpeace, the activist group which often interferes with seal and whale hunts. But members of Greenpeace recently interfered with a Russian hunt and were arrested off Kamchatka. The truth is that they, and Mowat, are activists without a country; their cause is nature.

In Brief

HOPE AND SUFFERING: SERMONS AND SPEECHES, by *Desmond Mpilo Tutu*, Eerdmans, \$10.95, 189 pp.

Bishop Tutu has said elsewhere the church has five marks: it is one, holy, catholic, apostolic, and suffering. In this brief collection of addresses and sermons, he describes the sufferings of South Africa's majority black population under apartheid. He proposes, but does not detail, a prophetic vision for societal change there, and simultaneously offers his personal example of enduring hope, one capable of sustaining the long-suffering in movements for human rights everywhere.

Desmond Tutu's theme is singular and unabashed: the abhorrent evil of the South African system. His theological method is here likewise singleminded: liberation-exodus is the lens by which to examine and weigh the apartheid situation. The bishop speaks with flowing ease and ready passion. What he has to

FALL '85

Henri J.M. Nouwen
George A. Maloney, S.J.
Catherine de Hueck Doherty
Segundo Galilea
John Wijngaards, MHM
Philip A. St. Romain

Love in a Fearful Land

A Guatemalan Story
Henri J.M. Nouwen

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say is not always couched in irenic terms. On occasion, he caricatures opponents, a fact not likely to engender their trust. He is firmly set as to his goals: the solution must be political. "Either there is going to be power-sharing or . . . we must give up hope of peaceful settlement in South Africa." The international community must bring economic pressure to bear on Pretoria. Finally, Tutu and his people are watching. "When we are free," he writes, "we will remember those who helped us to get free." It is that deliverance which animates Tutu. It is a hope assured, and richer than mere words.

P.J.

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 450)

of the killer AIDS opportunist diseases. I pray also each day that the extremely sinful prejudices against women and gays will come to an end within our church. Father Nieckarz's article has given me renewed hope that possibly some of my prayers are being answered.

GEORGE R. KISH

AIDS & journalism

West Cornwall, Conn.

To the Editors: I have just read your latest issue, including Jim Nieckarz's article on AIDS ["Our Fragile Brothers," July 12], and your reviews of the two current plays on the same subject. Both were fine pieces of writing and, for me, examples of Catholic journalism at its most sensitive and compassionate. I am grateful to you for your insight and thoughtfulness in publishing them.

BROTHER AELRED SETON

A parched path?

Fanwood, N.J.

To the Editors: I have a card in my wallet that I pull out from time to time. It reads, "In Memory Of Lawrence D. Hogan, Sr., born August 23, 1901, died June 29, 1978"; and below that the inscription is, "If we die with Christ, we shall live with him, and if we are faithful to the end, we shall reign with him." I turn it over and find much delight in words attributed to Thomas More, "Pray for me as I will for thee, that we may merrily meet in heaven."

I am troubled by John Garvey's recent musings on death and the afterlife ["The Last Solitude," May 17]. Let me raise a few quibbles: If I subscribe to Garvey's vision, do I lose a Jesus I have long treasured, the one who says, "Well done my good and faithful servant," the one who turns to the thief on his right and says, "This day you will be with me in paradise"?

If I follow Garvey do I have to forego the beautiful, sustaining, moving experi-

ence of listening to my friend, Tom Brown, give us from the pulpit at the memorial Mass for his twelve-year-old Molly a moment that will always be with me? He told us she had been given from God and had now gone back home, a home where someday we would join her.

Does the kind of thinking Garvey gives us — thinking that tells us "It is impossible to know what the cancellations involved in death and sufferings mean in any but the most tentative and awkward ways," and that warns us that imagining the afterlife in specific terms is an irreverence — mean that I will be denied the possibility of some future W.E.B. DuBois writing about loved ones in the way he eulogized the great black freedom fighter, Alexander Crummell? I treasure deeply the picture DuBois gives us of Crummell's end; it moves one to tears and cheers:

He sat one morning gazing toward the sea. He smiled and said, "The gate is rusty on the hinges." That night at star-rise a wind came moaning out of the west to blow the gate ajar, and then the soul I loved fled like a flame across the Seas, and in its seat sat Death.

I wonder where he is today? I wonder if in that dim world beyond, as he came gliding in, there rose on some wan throne a King — a dark and pierced Jew, who knows the writhings of the earthly damned, saying, as he laid those heart-wrung talents down, "Well done!" while round about the morning stars sat singing.

Does Garvey's conception of the afterlife mean that when I turn to my memorial card and feel the certainty it engenders — that some day Lawrence D., Sr. and Lawrence D., Jr. are going to be one again — that what I am doing is nothing more than an irreverent piece of imagining?

I suspect John Garvey would say no to these quibbles of mine. But I fear what he is giving us is, in fact, a pinched and parched path from which to confront the mystery that is death and the afterlife.

Let me suggest that imagining, another word for believing, is exactly the point. It is an absolute necessity if we are

to be truly involved in the work Garvey says is our duty, the "hope-filled work of trying to receive everything that we have been given."

LAWRENCE D. HOGAN, JR.

The author replies:

I think the main disagreement here is not over whether what we can expect is wonderful or not. I hope Mr. Hogan understands that what I intended to say, and what he may in fact have misunderstood (probably through my own clumsiness and not his lack of understanding) is that we cannot imagine what is in store for us. I mean this literally. Our current relationship to what we will be is something like the relationship of the conceptus to the fully developed human, and (if St. Gregory of Nyssa is right in his belief that our development is never-ending) that is itself not a good enough metaphor, nor is the metaphor of the acorn to the oak.

We do not know what living or dying really means; our vision is partial. Our relationship to consciousness, moment to moment, is far from clear. I certainly did not intend to say that we will be separated from the joy of union with those we love, but I would say that we have no idea what that might be like.

I don't at all think that imagining is another word for believing. This is precisely the charge atheists have made against belief for years: we offer ourselves consoling pictures which keep the dark away. Our hints of what future joy might be like are only hints, and if we depend too much on fleshing them out with our own pictures we run the real danger of believing in our pictures, rather than hoping, as we often do, without knowing exactly what our hope means. My pictures of what being a grown-up would be like when I was four are comically unlike what it has actually been; the resemblances are lots of fun, but not at all impressive. If I had come to depend on those early pictures, if I had been fierce about them, I would have been terribly disillusioned. I might never have noticed how much better the reality is than anything I could have imagined. Ultimately this may come down to the old debate between those who find the

use of images in spirituality helpful and those who find it a problem. I find the latter tradition (it exists in East and West, in Orthodox spirituality and that of the medieval English mystics) more helpful than the former.

I like the answer a religion teacher gave a child who asked if he would be able to be with a beloved pet in heaven. "If that is what your eternal happiness requires," the teacher said, "you'll have it." Finally, I think that what John's epistle says should be taken literally. We do not know what we shall be, but we will see Him as He is. I am sorry Mr. Hogan finds this approach "thin and parched." My suggestion — and it is only that — is that as rich as our imagining might be, it is thin and parched compared to a reality we have yet to grow into, and our imagination is not what will get us from here to there.

JOHN GARVEY

No more fall guys

Boston, Mass.

To the Editors: I was pleased to see the letters [May 3] from Francis Meehan and Anthony DiStephano in response to my March 8 article "On Not Writing a Dead Letter." If both seem to feel I was too "gentle" in my criticism of the bishops' neglect of their peace pastoral, that may be an occupational hazard for pacifists (of my era at least).

There is another reason though. It would be too easy to make the bishops the "fall guys" for the failure we fear. Most dioceses (to some extent, *all*) have fallen short of the hopes raised by the pastoral. Too many have done nothing at all, it seems, to implement its teachings and objectives. Even so, it is too simple to charge "the bishops" (as DiStephano does) with falling into the single-issue trap in the last election. *Some* bishops, most notably Archbishops O'Connor and Law, may have done so, but they were outnumbered, I am confident, by others who reminded their flocks of the obligation to consider a far wider range of issues than abortion and who gave special emphasis to the evils of nuclear war and the arms race. The problem was that press and TV reports paid little attention

to the balancing statements issued by the U.S.C.C. and, on another occasion, by twenty-three Pax Christi bishops.

The fault lay with the media who, understandably enough, found more mileage in sensationalizing the "Ferraro flap." An example is worth citing: When Pax Christi issued its carefully documented assessment of the extent to which the Reagan administration had ignored and reversed the pastoral recommendations, only three reporters bothered to attend the press conference. And they spent most of their time trying to get the presenting bishops (Matthiesen and Gumbleton) to say something "newsworthy" in criticism of their anti-Ferraro colleagues. Had they done so, there would have been headlines. As it was, the news conference (as well as the assessment statement, needless to say) was ignored — by *Commonweal* too, I am sorry to say.

DiStephano raises all the right questions, but maybe he is looking for the answers in the wrong places. "The bishops" have the obligation to provide that "genuine voice for peace and justice in the world," but so do we. And if, as seems to be the case with the peace pastoral, their voice is too weak and their message unclear, the rest of us must make up for it as best we can, hoping that sooner or later they will suit their actions to the exciting promise of their pastoral's words.

GORDON C. ZAHN

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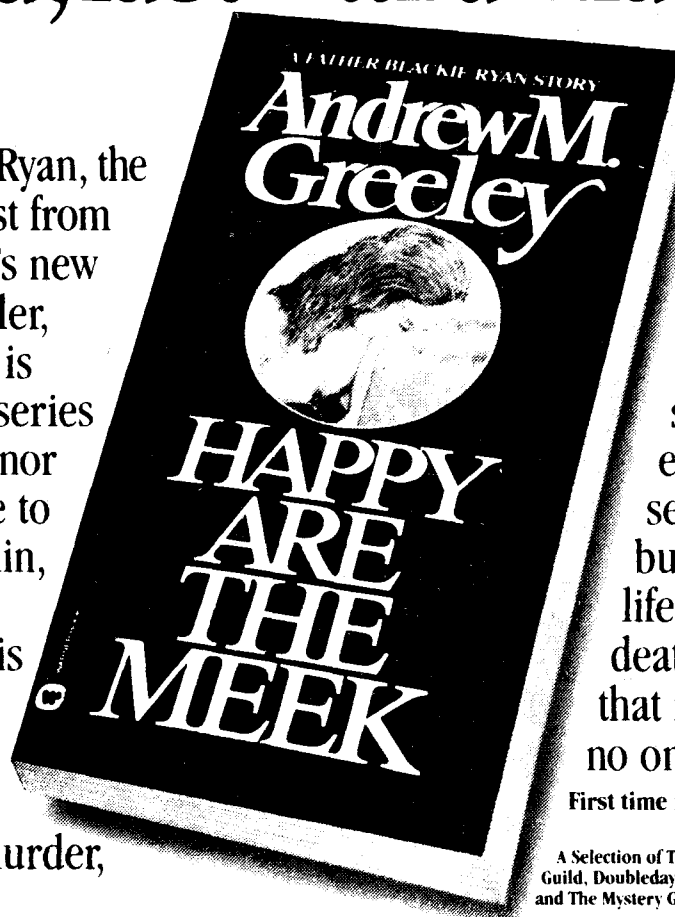
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